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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

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52 & 53 VICTORIÆ, 1889.

VOL. CCCXXXIV.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE EIGHTEENTH DAY OF MARCH, 1889,

TO

THE EIGHTH DAY OF APRIL, 1889.

Second Volume of the Session.

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ERRATA.

Mar. 29. Mr. W. H. SMITH, on page 1169, line 15, *alter* with remorse *to* reverently.

April 1. Lord CHARLES BERESFORD, on page 1257, lines 34 and 40, *alter* twenty *to* thirty; page 1258, lines 22 and 25, *alter* twenty *to* thirty.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

IN THE

FOURTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET 5 AUGUST, 1886, IN THE FIFTIETH
YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

No. 1.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [MARCH 26.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 18*th March*, 1889.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE METROPOLIS—PERSONAL EXPLANATION—LORD LAMINGTON.

LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, I have received a letter from Mr. Pearson, the architect engaged in connection with the alterations at Westminster Hall, in consequence of which I desire to correct a mis-statement I made in calling your Lordships' attention on Monday last to the general question of public buildings in the Metropolis. I stated that there was only one entrance to the upper floor. Mr. Pearson informs me that there are three entrances to the rooms on the upper floor, and two entrances to the rooms on the lower floor. I did full justice to the exterior architecture of the building; but, in spite of this letter from Mr. Pearson, who seems rather aggrieved at what I said, I still think that it is a great pity that the alterations should have been so carried out as to render some of the rooms practically useless. In saying this, of course, I do not wish to impute any fault to Mr. Pearson; it is the design adopted by the Select Committee on Westminster Hall of which I complain.

H.M.S. *SULTAN*.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: Seeing in his place the noble Lord who represents the Admiralty in this House, I beg to ask whether any definite information has been received respecting the disaster to H.M.S. *Sultan*?

LORD ELPHINSTONE: The Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean reports that the *Sultan* grounded on a rock or patch of rocks unmarked on the charts, and where deep water is shown. In fact, she is on the ten-fathom line, and 400 yards from the shore. Of course, whether this is due to defective survey or to recent volcanic action cannot at present be determined. The Commander-in-Chief has been instructed to cause every inquiry to be

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

made locally, from fishermen and others likely to know, as to whether anything was known of the exact position of this rock. The channel was surveyed in 1857. The circumstances of the stranding of the *Sultan* will be fully investigated by a court-martial that will be held at Portsmouth under the presidency of the Commander-in-Chief at that port.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: May I ask whether any hopes are entertained of raising the vessel?

LORD ELPHINSTONE: We have no further information of any kind beyond the telegraphic despatch which I have read; but we expect to get fuller information to-morrow morning.

DURATION OF SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT BILL (No. 21.)

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD DENMAN: My Lords, this is a measure the object of which I have had the honour to explain to your Lordships on former occasions. I have to apologise for naming the House of Commons, but your Lordships may in Committee strike out those words, and if the Bill should be in Committee in another place, the words might be re-instated. It is directed especially against the practice of speakers in Parliament of speaking against time according to orders, similar to the orders given by the owner of a race-horse to his jockey, which is a practice unworthy of Parliament, and one which greatly impedes public business. I would urge upon your Lordships that, at least, this Bill can do no harm. We have many instances of assemblies in which there is a time limit, and it is always found that those who address the meeting conform to the time prescribed, with very few exceptions. If your Lordships doubt the necessity for such a measure, I need only refer you to the pages of *Hansard* for 1887-8 to prove the existence of the evil against which the Bill is directed. I am afraid anything I could say would have very little influence with your Lordships, but I have determined to do my duty in a straightforward way; and, without wearying your Lordships with a long speech, I now move the Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*Lord Denman.*)

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I do not think the time has arrived for, at any rate, this House to take up such a measure as this. I certainly have not noticed here the evil of undue prolixity to which the noble Lord has referred. If ever that evil arises, and business should get into the position in which we are told it is in another place, I should be glad to accept the assistance of my noble Friend in coping with the difficulty. I think if the noble Lord would go over the way and propose his measure there, it might have some beneficial effect; but, so far as this House is concerned, I feel I shall be carrying your Lordships' consciousness with me when I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment moved, to leave out the word "now," and add at the end of the Motion "this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

On Question whether the word "now" stand part of the Motion, resolved in the negative.

Bill to be read 2^a this day six months.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE BILL (No. 22).

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD DENMAN: With regard to this proposal, it is again one which your Lordships have had before you on more than one occasion. In the Representation of the People Bill, the noble Marquess, then Leader of the Opposition, secured me four days in order for the insertion of my Amendment as to Women's Suffrage, without which the Bill seemed to me to be imperfect. It seems to me not only a ludicrous anomaly, but a great hardship, that whilst labourers and others employed on a certain estate have the franchise, the owner of the estate, if she happens to be a widow or a spinster, should not be on at least equal terms. In the House of Commons the Second Reading of a Bill similar to this has once been carried, although in a manner not very creditable to that House. If your Lordships grant the Second Reading of this Bill it will be a gracious act; it will commit you to nothing, and the details of the measure can be thrashed out in Committee.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Denman.*)

THE MARQUESS OF **SALISBURY**: I am sorry to appear in any way obstructive, especially on a question as to the main points of which I am in general agreement with the noble Lord. But, my Lords, I hold that it is a very important principle that each House should look after its own constitution. I would not encourage any proposals by the House of Commons as to the constitution of the House of Lords, and nothing would be more calculated to have that effect than if your Lordships were to consent to this proposal. On this short ground, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment moved, to leave out "now," and add at the end of the Motion "this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

EARL **GRANVILLE**: I understand that, on a previous occasion, the noble Marquess expressed himself in favour of the principle of the measure. It would, no doubt, have greater weight if Her Majesty's Government introduced a Bill on the subject in the other House of Parliament.

THE MARQUESS OF **SALISBURY**: When I uttered the opinion to which the noble Lord refers, I was very careful to say that it was only my own personal opinion that I was expressing, and I did not in any way speak on behalf of Her Majesty's Government.

On Question, That the word "now" stand part of the Motion, resolved in the negative.

Bill to be read 2ª this day six months.

LAND TRANSFER BILL (No. 8).

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

The Lords following were named of the Committee—

L. Chancellor
M. Bath
E. Stanhope
E. Milltown
E. Morley
E. Beauchamp
E. Kimberley
E. Feversham
E. Selborne
L. Arundell of Wardour
L. Thurlow
L. Hartismere (L. Henniker)
L. Watson
L. Hobhouse
L. Esher
L. Herschell
L. Thring

LICENSING ACT, 1872, AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 25).

A Bill to amend the Licensing Act, 1872, as to the granting licences for sale of intoxicating liquors at railway stations—Presented by the Earl Beauchamp; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday, the 26th instant.

COMPANIES RELIEF BILL (NO. 26).

A Bill to set at rest questions affecting certain shares issued under contracts filed under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1867—Presented by the Lord Wigan (E. Crawford); read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday, the 26th instant.

House adjourned at a quarter before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 18th March 1889.

QUEEN'S SPEECH (ANSWER TO ADDRESS).

THE **COMPTROLLER** OF THE **HOUSEHOLD** (LORD ARTHUR HILL) reported Her Majesty's Answer to the Address, as followeth:—

> I thank you for your loyal and dutiful Address, and for your assurance that you will take into your careful consideration the Measures which may be submitted to you.
>
> You may rely on My cordial co-operation in your endeavours to promote the well-being of My People in all parts of My Dominions.

QUESTIONS.

POSTAL FACILITIES IN INVERNESS-SHIRE.

MR. **FRASER-MACKINTOSH** (Inverness-shire) asked the Postmaster General why the postal facilities demanded by the residents above Findhorn Bridge, in Inverness-shire, on the South Bank of the River Findhorn, have been refused; whether the residents on the North Bank of the River Findhorn have a regular post; whether complaints have reached the Department that the post office at Tomatin, situated under the same roof with a building holding a licence for the sale of spirituous liquors, is by the South Bank residents held to be a snare and danger to the persons, generally young, who have to be sent to Tomatin to post and call for letters; and whether, by a small expenditure, the post runner who performs the circuit from Tomatin, by Freeburn and Corrybrough, could overtake a daily delivery in the South Bank district?

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigtonshire, a LORD OF THE TREASURY): The Postmaster General does not feel justified in sanctioning an extension of the post to the South Bank of the River Findhorn, because the letters are very few in number—about three a day only—and the expense necessary would be out of all proportion to the revenue. The residents on the North Bank of that river have a regular post. As regards the post office at Tomatin, no complaints such as those referred to by the hon. Member have reached the Department. The sub-postmistress resides with her brother, who holds a licence for the sale of liquors not to be drunk on the premises. I believe the inhabitants generally are very well satisfied with the management of the office. The last suggestion of the hon. Member is not practicable, on the score of expense.

SALMON FISHING IN SCOTLAND.

MR. MACKINTOSH asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has observed that a notice has been issued by the Solicitor in Scotland to the Woods and Forests, warning the public that fishing for salmon without a Crown grant is illegal; what is the object of this notice at the present time; and whether it is the fact that rights of salmon fishing can be acquired otherwise than by grant referred to?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The notice in question was published because representation was made to the Commissioners of Woods that a paragraph in the *Dundee Advertiser* purporting to express the views of the Fishery Board on the subject would otherwise encourage fishermen in the belief that they were entitled to fish for salmon in the sea beyond one mile from the shore. A similar notice was published in 1886. It is not known that salmon fishings can be acquired otherwise than by grant from the Crown.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock) asked if there had not been a persistent and deliberate misrepresentation of the rights of the fishermen to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, and whether the claim of the fishermen with respect to fishing for salmon was not a perfectly legal one?

MR. JACKSON: Outside they have no rights.

MR. WILLIAMSON intimated that he would take an early opportunity of calling attention to the subject.

THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the evidence given by Mrs. Grundy, landlady of the "Green Man Inn," and the remarks of Mr. Justice Stephen thereon (as reported in the Nottingham *Daily Express* of 6th March), at the Nottinghamshire Assizes, on the 5th March, in a case where James Low was indicted for killing Joseph T. Taylor at Nottingham on 21st February:—

> "The learned Judge, in summing up the evidence, said that if the jury believed that prisoner killed Taylor by throwing him down in the course of a struggle it was manslaughter. The witness, Mrs. Grundy, landlady of the 'Green Man Inn,' was recalled, and asked by his Lordship whether beer had been given to these people who were in the house on the night in question? Witness: Yes. His Lordship: How much? Witness: 36 gallons. His Lordship: Who gave it them? Witness: The landlord. His Lordship: Out of his own pocket, I suppose? Witness: Yes. His Lordship: Who is the landlord? Witness: Mr. Robinson. His Lordship: Who is Mr. Robinson? Witness: A brewer. Do you (witness) mean to say that 36 gallons of beer were supplied without stint to all people?—Witness: Yes. His Lordship: I think it is a most improper thing. Have you a licence?—Witness: Yes. His Lordship: I think it is a matter which should be brought before the licensing justices. I think it is a very discreditable proceeding. I think a person in a superior position of life, who has the opportunity of distributing quantities of beer to a number of labouring men going into a public house of that kind, acts with great want of common sense and real good nature to the people whom he supplies in this way with liquor. This is the kind of way in which a thing of that kind is not unlikely to end."

Whether the Mr. Robinson referred to is at present Sheriff of the borough of Nottingham; and whether he proposes to make any investigation into or take any action in the matter?

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) also asked whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been called to a trial for manslaughter before Sir FitzJames Stephens at Nottingham on March 5th, where, according to the accounts in the Nottingham papers, the Judge made severe comments on the conduct of Mr. Robinson, Sheriff of the county of the town of Nottingham; whether his Lordship described the conduct of the Sheriff in

> "Distributing quantities of beer to a number of labouring men going into a public house as a very discreditable proceeding,"

and added that he considered the person who supplied the ale gratis to be greatly responsible for what occurred—namely, the manslaughter; whether, if this be the case, the right hon. gentleman intends taking any steps towards censuring or otherwise dealing with the Sheriff for what the Judge described as his very improper conduct; and whether it is the case that this Sheriff of the county of the town of Nottingham owns upwards of 100 public houses in the town of Nottingham?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The facts are correctly stated. The case occurred at a time when there were general festivities, incidental to Mr. Robinson's son coming of age, and the Sheriff, wishing not to exclude the poorer classes from a share in the rejoicings, distributed refreshments gratis at certain places. All the facts were not known to the learned Judge when he used the expressions quoted, and when the circumstances were made known to him he took occasion on a subsequent day, as no doubt both hon. Members are aware, to express publicly his sorrow at having spoken as he did, and thereby given pain to a gentleman whose real wish was to be kind and friendly to his neighbours, and especially his poorer neighbours. The learned Judge informs me that, had he known the facts, he would have considerably softened the severity of his remarks, and while he is of opinion that the distribution of beer was incautious, he cannot say on reflection that it was directly connected with the offence in question. After this expression of opinion by the Judge, I do not intend to take any steps towards censuring or otherwise dealing with the Sheriff, whose only fault was a mistaken kindness, and who, I am sure, must regret the deplorable fatality which marred the general rejoicings. The Sheriff informs me that he owns 37, not 100, public-houses in the town of Nottingham.

MR. J. ELLIS: Did not the learned Judge, in the explanation to which the right hon. Gentleman refers, use these words—

> "I still think, and I cannot withdraw the words I used, that to take the course of distributing beer to a set of labouring men who entered a public house in the ordinary way was misdirected benevolence."

MR. MATTHEWS: In the report I have of the Judge's expression those words occur. I may observe that the hon. Gentleman, when he put his question without noticing the expressions of the learned Judge, was aware of them.

MR. J. ELLIS: Oh, I was quite aware of them.

SIR W. MARRIOTT AND SIR EDGAR VINCENT.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the correspondence which, according to reports in the Press, has passed between Sir William Marriott and Sir Edgar Vincent has been forwarded to the Foreign Office by Sir Evelyn Baring; and whether Her Majesty's Government have any objection to its production?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The correspondence between Sir W. Marriott and Sir Edgar Vincent has only been forwarded privately and unofficially, and cannot be presented.

THE IRISH PRISON BOARD.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I have a question on the Paper to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Is it a fact that the Prison Board in Ireland has refused to hold communication with prison chaplains in relation to prisoners except through the medium of the governors of the prisons; under what rule is this practice enforced; and, whether, having regard to the fact that the prison chaplains are virtually independent of the governors, he will direct the Prisons Board to entertain communications from the chaplains without this intervention of the governors? As the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is not present, I will defer the question.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): I am prepared to answer it.

MR. MAC NEILL: I beg to defer it.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! As the Solicitor General is prepared to answer it, I call upon the Solicitor General.

*MR. MADDEN: The General Prisons Board informs me that the governor of a prison being responsible for its discipline, it is the practice to require all the officers of the prison, including the chaplain or chaplains, to forward communications on ordinary matters, or on matters for which the governor is responsible, through that officer, whose report on such matters is obviously necessary. At the same time, the Board always receives any confidential report or remarks of the chaplains regarding the welfare of prisoners of their own denomination whenever they see fit to make such communications. The Board adds that the chaplain is not virtually independent of the prison governor, either in Ireland or, so far as the Board is aware, in England.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Would the chaplain be required to report to the governor on a matter affecting the governor himself?

*MR. MADDEN: That I imagine would be an exceptional case, but the right hon. Gentleman had better put a question on the paper.

IRISH PRISON SURGEONS.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant whether his attention has been directed to an article in the *Medical Press*, reprinted in the *Irish Times* of the 7th March, complaining that Irish prison surgeons are made the scapegoats for the acts of the Government whenever these acts may create uproar or involve adverse criticism; is it a fact that the Prisons Board requires a weekly return of extra diets and remissions of prison discipline ordered by the surgeons, with the reasons for which they are granted, to prisoners under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act; and have prison surgeons been reprimanded by the Prisons Board for the granting of such indulgences and remissions to such prisoners?

*MR. MADDEN: There is no truth in the statement that the Irish prison surgeons are made the scapegoats for the acts of the Government.

IRELAND—POLICE PASSES.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant whether it is a fact that Sergeant Mahony, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, issues passports to the inhabitants of Gweedore, of one of which the following is a copy: "Pass ————. Signed, Owen Mahony, Sergeant, R.I.C.;" under what authority is Sergeant Mahony empowered either to give or to withhold permission to the inhabitants of Gweedore to go or come in pursuance of their lawful avocations; and is it a fact, as stated in the *Derry Journal* of March 4th, 1889, that

> "Sergeant Mahony, R.I.C., is arresting and discharging at will peasants in Gweedore, and that he and certain other members of the constabulary have fired on persons flying through bogs to escape being hurried off as handcuffed suspects to gaol, &c.?"

*MR. MADDEN explained that Sergt. Mahony had given the documents in question to certain persons to save them from inconvenience. It is not true that Mahony was arresting and discharging at will peasants in Donegal.

MR. MAC NEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Blackburn, at the present moment in charge of a detachment of the Irish Constabulary, recently presented a revolver at the head of a man?

*MR. MADDEN: That question does not arise out of my answer.

MR. SEXTON: Are the police entitled to limit the freedom of the Irish people by issuing passes? Where do they get their authority?

*MR. MADDEN: I stated in my answer that no officer of the Irish Constabulary has power to limit the freedom of the people by issuing passes. In the case of two persons passes were given to show they were free from suspicion.

MR. SEXTON: Does it not follow that other persons in the district were suspected?

*MR. MADDEN: No, Sir.

THE COAL MINES REGULATION ACT.

MR. WILLIAM CRAWFORD (Durham, Mid) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if it is in keeping with the provisions of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," to compel workmen to descend and ascend the shaft of a coal mine with loaded tubs in the same cage, or the companion cage running in the same shaft, as it is now done at the Wearmouth Colliery, in the county of Durham?

MR. MATTHEWS: There is nothing in the provisions of the Coal Mines Act, 1887, to forbid the practice in question, which is regulated by special rules in the different collieries. In the Wearmouth Colliery there is a special rule (established after discussions in which the men were represented) against allowing men to descend or ascend with or against a loaded tub without permission; and I am informed that the permission given is in accordance with a practice which has prevailed there many years without accident.

ZANZIBAR.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the trade of British Indian subjects in Zanzibar has been nearly ruined by the action of the Germans on the mainland, putting a stop alike to the coastwise and the interior trade; that the main result of the bombardment of coast ports by German war ships has been the destruction of the property of Indians; that in one case an Indian merchant and his wife were shot in their house by German sailors; and that within a space of two months upwards of 1,000 Indians left Zanzibar for India, the majority being utterly ruined; and, whether he will take any steps to ascertain the extent of the injury done, and to obtain compensation from the German Government for the losses sustained by British subjects?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: It is true that on that part of the coast which is the scene of disturbances British Indians have suffered great losses from the stoppage of trade and destruction of property, though a large number are still residing and carrying on business within the sphere of German influence. I cannot say that the destruction of the property of the Indians has been the main result of the action of German ships, although incidentally they have suffered by the state of war. In September an Indian and his wife were unfortunately killed in the firing which followed on an attack upon the German Company's people by some natives from the interior. Indians have returned home in a destitute condition, but we have no actual account of their numbers. Deeply as the losses of these British subjects is to be regretted, there is no principle of international law on which compensation can be demanded from the German Government.

MR. BRADLAUGH gave notice that, in consequence of the exceeding gravity of the facts and the answer which had just been given, he would at the earliest opportunity raise the question before the House.

MR. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester) asked whether it was true, as stated in the *Times* of to-day, that Colonel Euan Smith had publicly warned all British subjects to withdraw from Saadani, in consequence of an official announcement by the German Admiral of his intention to punish that place?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: It is true that the British subjects have been warned to withdraw from Saadani in consequence of the official announcement of the German Admiral of his intention to punish that place. The Admiral, in the notice he has given, has observed the forms of war, and Her Majesty's Government would not be entitled to object to his proceedings.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): Have memorials been received at the Foreign Office claiming compensation?

***SIR J. FERGUSSON**: The hon. Member had better give notice of that Question.

H.M.S. *SULTAN*.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether there is any truth in the report that the grounding of the *Sultan* was due to a defective chart of the Maltese Islands; and, in view of the crucial test to which surveys are subject in these days of deep draught, high speed, and torpedo operations, whether he will consider the advisability of encouraging naval officers possessed of the necessary aptitude to join the surveying branch of the profession, by permitting promotion to operate as freely in that as in other branches, such as that of gunnery and torpedo work?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The Commander-in-Chief reports that the *Sultan* grounded on a patch of rocks unmarked on the chart and where deep water is shown. Whether this is due to defective survey or recent volcanic action cannot at present be stated. The Commander-in-Chief has been instructed to cause every inquiry to be made locally, from fishermen and others, as to any previous knowledge of the existence of these rocks. The channel where the accident occurred was surveyed in 1857 and 1860. The circumstances attending the stranding of the *Sultan* will be fully investigated by a Court Martial that will be held at Portsmouth under the presidency of the Commander-in-Chief at that port. The Admiralty fully recognize the valuable work done by the surveying officers, and it is their wish to encourage officers with an aptitude for this class of work to join that branch of the Service. The pay they get while surveying is considerably higher than that of other officers of their rank, and their claims for promotion are considered equally with those of their brother officers.

THE DECLARATION OF PARIS.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, irkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Empire of Germany and the Kingdom of Italy hold themselves to be bound by the Declaration of Paris, April 16th, 1856, respecting neutral maritime rights in time of war, to which the Kingdoms of Prussia and Sardinia respectively agreed?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Both Germany and Italy in recent Treaties with foreign Powers have declared that, with regard to those Powers, they accepted the principles of the Declaration of Paris.

RICHMOND PARK.

SIR JOHN ELLIS (Surrey, Kingston) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether any large number of oak trees have been felled in Richmond Park; whether a formal avenue of trees has been planted; and, whether representations have reached him that a single avenue of trees is out of keeping and will seriously interfere with the picturesque character of the park?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): I think I can best answer the question of my hon. Friend by quoting a few lines from a Report which has been made to me on the subject of the new avenue of horse-chestnuts in Richmond Park by Mr. John Clutton, whose name is well known as that of one of the best authorities on the subject of park plantations of the present day, and who has been our adviser on the management of the timber of Richmond Park for the last twenty-five years, with, I think, very satisfactory results. Mr. Clutton writes as follows:—

> "I advised in 1885 that the avenue of chestnuts referred to should be planted, and so far as I could ascertain it was thought at the time that such an avenue would be an improvement to the park. The chestnut trees, having been most carefully planted and cared for by the woodman in the park, have made good progress. In carrying this avenue in a direct line from the Ladder Stile to Ham Cross (where four roads meet), two oak trees and 16 old oak pollards stood between the two lines of young trees, and thus destroyed the effect intended to be produced. The old pollards were, for the most part, mere shells, fast passing into decay, and near them are many others in a similar condition. My reasons for recommending an avenue were, first, that it would form a shady walk of about half a mile in the line of a much-frequented footpath leading from Richmond to Coombe and New Malden by the Ladder Stile Gate; secondly, that there are many of the finest avenues (fast falling to decay) in several of the Royal parks, such as Bushey Park (horse-chestnuts), and Windsor Park (elms and other trees). The avenues and rides in Windsor Park are numerous and extensive. In Richmond Park also there is the Queen's Ride, on either side of which the trees are old and becoming decayed."

I may add that the two oak trees and the 16 old oak pollards which have thus been removed, formed a corner of a wood in which there still remain several hundreds of similar trees.

IRELAND—MR. CREAGH, J.P.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Creagh, J.P., of Quin, county Clare, who was wounded on Sunday, the 10th instant, has been three times fired at since 1872; whether his attention has been called to the fact that on one of these occasions the man who fired at him blew off his own finger owing to the bursting of his gun, and was arrested, but acquitted by a Clare jury, although the finger which had been picked up on the spot was produced in Court, and found to be the finger of the prisoner; and if Mr. Creagh and his sister are under police protection?

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked whether the hon. and learned Gentleman's attention had been directed to a statement made at the local branch of the National League to the effect that Mr. Creagh was a kindly, good-natured gentleman, with all the qualities necessary to entitle him to the popularity he enjoyed, and that he was known to have supported many poor people out of his own pocket in times of distress?

*MR. MADDEN: The hon. Member must give notice of that question. It is the case that Mr. Creagh, J.P., has been fired at on three occasions since 1872. When fired at in 1872, he was about to evict the father of the man who was subsequently charged with the offence. The man was arrested as he was about to get his hand, which was in a shattered condition, amputated. It is the fact that medical evidence was given at the trial to the effect that a finger found at the scene of the outrage, where the blunderbuss used had exploded, belonged to the amputated hand, and that, notwithstanding this evidence, the jury acquitted the accused. Since the recent firing at Mr. Creagh and his sister, they are receiving police protection, and a police hut is about to be erected near Mr. Creagh's house.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that a public meeting has been held in the locality to protest, in the strongest manner, against the outrage in question?

*MR. MADDEN: I am not aware of it.

WESTMEATH EXTRA POLICE.

In answer to Mr. DONAL SULLIVAN,

*MR. MADDEN said the Constabulary authorities report that, with the exception of one murder of an agrarian character, the county of Westmeath is fairly quiet, though, unfortunately, it is still necessary to afford police protection to a large number of persons, in connection with which 15 policemen are constantly employed. The question of the extra police force in the county has been recently inquired into, with a result that a reduction of five in the number was effected from February 1 last. No further reduction is at present possible.

DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONERS.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland under what circumstances the position of divisional magistrate was abolished and that of divisional commissioner instituted; and whether the salaries and duties of the present divisional commissioners are the same as when these gentlemen were called divisional magistrates?

*MR. MADDEN said that it had been long felt that the title of Divisional Magistrate was misleading, and the title of Divisional Commissioner had been adopted as more appropriate, inasmuch as the duties of the officers in question were purely executive.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Did they retain and exercise the functions of magistrates?

*MR. MADDEN: They did not exercise any judicial functions; their functions were neither more nor less after the change of name.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the attention of the Lord Lieutenant be called to the fact that, being no longer magistrates in name, they should not be allowed to be so in fact?

MR. LANE: May I ask whether, since the change in name, the Lord Lieutenant has not conferred upon these gentlemen Commissions of the Peace for the same districts over which they acted as divisional magistrates?

*MR. MADDEN: I must ask for notice of that question.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AT MERTHYR.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when, and in the Police Force of which county adjacent to Glamorganshire, Captain Lindsay had been employed; if he would state on what previous occasions the office of Superintendent of Police for Merthyr has been filled by appointment from outside the ranks of the police force of the county; whether Captain Lindsay had any knowledge of Welsh, a language which is very extensively spoken in the district; what is the salary attaching to the office of Superintendent at Merthyr, and what are the salaries of the superintendents of other districts in Glamorganshire; whether he had reason to believe that the Chief Constable was unable to discover among the police of the county a man qualified to discharge the duties of Superintendent of Merthyr efficiently; if he could state what qualifications Captain Lionel Lindsay, the son of the Chief Constable, possessed for the office; whether the satisfaction evinced by the police force of the county in general at Captain Lindsay's appointment was shared by those who in the ordinary course might have expected promotion upon the retirement of Superintendent Thomas; whether the joint committee of magistrates and county councillors will have any power to revise this appointment; and whether he would exert his influence with Colonel Lindsay with a view to making the latter see the propriety of cancelling the appointment of his son to the remunerative public office in question?

COLONEL HILL (Bristol, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers this question, may I ask him in relation to the same subject whether the Chief Constable of Glamorganshire has for 22 years continued to discharge the difficult duties of his office with singular ability; whether it is the fact that such appointments have never been questioned, though the officers did not always possess a knowledge of the Welsh language; whether with respect to the force under his command the appointment of officers does not rest absolutely with the Chief Constable; and whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the gentleman who is the subject of the question has so rapidly made himself acquainted with German, French, Italian, and Arabic, as to warrant the belief that he will soon acquire a competent knowledge of the Welsh language?

MR. MATTHEWS: Captain Lindsay's previous police service has been in Egypt, not in this country. The office in question has hitherto been filled by promotion from the force. Neither Captain Lindsay nor his predecessors in the office had knowledge of the Welsh language. I am not acquainted with Captain Lindsay's linguistic accomplishments, mentioned by my hon. Friend, but no doubt what he says is accurate. The salaries of superintendents in this force are £160, rising to £200 after five years. The Chief Constable considered that Captain Lindsay was better qualified than anyone else. The selection was approved by the Chairman of Quarter Sessions and the Justices of the Petty Sessional division. Captain Lindsay has a good record of police service in Egypt, and has received excellent testimonials from the chief officers of police in that country. I have no reason to doubt that the appointment is popular in the force. I am not aware of any provision in the Statute for the revision of an appointment such as this, which has been properly made in accordance with the law. It is not my intention to make any representation to the Chief Constable on the subject.

THE CORK SUB-COMMISSION.

MR. LANE (on behalf of Mr. MAURICE HEALY, Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many unions are at present included within the circuit of the County Cork Sub-Commission, including the Waterford unions recently added to it; what is the average number of Poor Law unions at present included in the circuit of a Sub-Commission; how many fair rent applications from the county Cork were unheard up to the end of February 1889; how many of the county Waterford unions are included in the circuit of the Cork Sub-Commission, and how many unions lie partly in the county Waterford and partly in the county Cork; whether the Chairman of the Sub Commission and the Registrar have, under the present arrangement, to act with the Waterford Lay Commissioners as well as with the Cork Lay Commissioners, and sit alternately in the county Waterford and in remote parts of the county Cork; whether, within the past month, in consequence of this state of things, the Chairman and Registrar had to go from a sitting in Bantry, county Cork, to one in Lismore, county Waterford, then to one in Skibbereen, county Cork, then to one in Dungarvan, county Waterford, and next to one in Mallow, county Cork; and, whether he was aware that the effect of these inconvenient arrangements had been to greatly hamper the Sub-Commission and to lessen its capacity for the disposal of business?

*MR. MADDEN: The Land Commissioners inform me that there are 15 unions wholly within the county of Cork, three unions partly in that county and partly in other counties, and three unions wholly within the county of Waterford, and four partly in Waterford, and partly in other counties. There is, therefore, a total of 18 unions and parts of seven unions in the circuit of the Cork Sub-Commission. The average number of unions included in the circuit of a Sub-Commission is 16. There are about 5,041 fair-rent applications from the County Cork which were undisposed of by the Land Commission at the end of February, 1889. The necessity which exists for the Chairman and Registrar of the Sub-Commission to travel backwards and forwards to each of the pair of lay Assistant Commissioners is one which must exist where there are three pair of lay Assistant Commissioners presided over by them, unless the three pair were to work in adjoining unions, which would cause parties in distant unions to be dissatisfied. The necessity which exists does not hamper the Sub Commission or lessen its capacity for work, although it does throw additional labour on the Chairman and Registrar.

MRS. HINDS' TENANTS.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is a fact that Mr. Henry A. Robinson, J.P., of Roundstone, county Galway, who is agent for Mrs. Hinds, is in the habit of serving on the tenants, year after year, ejectment notices for practically one half year's rent, the other half year being the running gale, which are habitually withdrawn on payment of 10s., solicitor's costs; can he state who Mr. Robinson's solicitor is; whether he is aware that, within the past few days, Mr. Robinson has had a number of tenants served with such notices; and whether there is any way for protecting these tenants from such treatment?

*MR. MADDEN: I regret that I am unable to give the hon. Member any information in regard to the matters of fact referred to in the question, the matter being one of which the Government have no cognizance.

PROCESS SERVING IN KILCAR.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it was a fact that for some days past a process-server, on behalf of Mr. Musgrave, had been going through the parish of Kilrea, in the county of Donegal, serving ejectment processes on the tenants of Mr. Musgrave's estate in the said parish; whether the process-server was accompanied in his work by two constables of the Royal Irish Constabulary; and, under whose directions were the services of the said constables so employed?

*MR. MADDEN: The Constabulary Authorities report that the facts are as stated in the first paragraph, with the exception of the name of the parish, which should be Kilcar. Also that it is the case that the man was followed by two constables. These constables were sent as an ordinary precaution by the police officer in charge of the station.

THE POTATO CROP IN DONEGAL.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been directed to the fact that in the parishes of Gweedore, Cloughaneely, the two Rosses parishes, the parish of Kilcar, and several other districts in the County of Donegal, the failure of the potato crop last autumn was as complete as in the autumn of 1879; whether some of the inhabitants of these parishes had been compelled since last Christmas to live on Indian meal in order to preserve the potato seed, while others had no money to buy Indian meal, and had been compelled to live on the potato seed; whether he will make inquiries whether the inhabitants of the districts in question were in many instances without potato seed for the coming spring, and without the prospect of food; and what steps the Government were taking, or proposed to take, to avert from these districts the approach of actual famine; also, whether the parish priest of Gweedore was Father M'Fadden, so well known?

*MR. MADDEN: I am informed that, in the parishes of Cloughaneely and the

Rosses' potatoes are not as bad as in the year 1879, while in the parishes of Gweedore and Kilcar the crop is as bad as in that year. However, generally throughout the county the potato crop, though not up to the average, has been by no means a failure. It is the fact that some of the inhabitants of those parishes have been living on Indian meal since Christmas. I am informed that there is no appearance of famine in any part of the county this year, and that very few (if any) of the people are without potato seed for the forthcoming spring. I do not see that the Government can, under the circumstances, take any steps in the matter.

MR. MAC NEILL: If the facts I put forward are vouched for by the Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Catholic Bishop of the diocese, will the Government take steps to avert the threatened calamity?

*MR. MADDEN: The Government will welcome any information and suggestions. Further than that I cannot go.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is the potato crop as bad in Gweedore as in 1879?

MR. MADDEN: Yes; that is one of the places where the crop is as bad as in that year.

TRALEE ASSIZE COURT.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it had been brought under his notice that, at the Tralee Courthouse on Tuesday, a local Roman Catholic clergyman sought admission into the Assize Court, which was not more than half filled at the time, whereupon a young policeman roughly seized the reverend gentleman by the coat and forced him into the outside corridor; and whether he would inquire into the truth of the complaint; and, if it was well founded, prevent the recurrence of such behaviour?

MR. MADDEN: The Constabulary Authorities report that it is the case that the constable endeavoured to keep the reverend gentleman out of the Court. A disturbance had occurred at the door immediately before, and the constable, who had recently joined the force, acted through inexperience. The constable is now aware of his duty in such cases.

MR. FLYNN: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman say if a general instruction will be given to the Constabulary to prevent the recurrence of such an incident?

*MR. MADDEN: I have told the hon. Member that in this case the constable has been informed of his duty. The incident is not one which is likely to occur sufficiently often to necessitate the issue of a new general instruction.

MR. FLYNN: Can the hon. and learned Gentleman say if the constable was reprimanded?

*MR. MADDEN: My information is that he was informed of his duty, and I take that to be an euphemism for being reprimanded.

THE POLICE AT FERMOY.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland if his attention had been called to the reports of the Cork papers of the 6th inst., to the effect that a meeting of the Young Ireland Society, of Fermoy, being held in their own rooms, to congratulate Mr. Thomas Barry, P.L.G., a member of the Society, on his release from Cork Prison, where he had been imprisoned under the Crimes Act, two sergeants of Constabulary, named Kelly and Black, and two constables (one of whom refused to give his name) entered the room, and, though called upon by the officers of the Society to leave, refused to do so; that Sergeant Black gave as an excuse, that he believed it was intended to hold a meeting of the "suppressed" branch of the National League, but, though informed such was not the case, the police persisted in remaining on private premises despite the protest of the members, and the Society thereon resented this intrusion by passing a condemnatory resolution in the presence of the constables; if he could state under what statute or authority the police committed what appeared to have been a trespass upon private premises; and if he would call for an explanation of their conduct upon this occasion?

*MR. MADDEN: I am informed that the police entered the room in which the meeting was about to be held under the belief that the meeting was to be one of the Land League. Inasmuch as the League had been proclaimed in that district, a meeting of that body would have been an unlawful assembly. The sergeant reports it as his belief that a meeting of the League would have been held on that occasion had it not been for the presence of the police.

MR. FLYNN: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman mean to say that the belief of the sergeant was a justification, that it entitled him to trespass upon private property?

*MR. MADDEN: I do not understand from the information before me that any trespass was committed, but if there was a trespass committed, of course, there is a remedy at law.

MR. FLYNN: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman make further inquiry whether the police acted upon belief only?

DR. TANNER: Is it not a fact that this very sergeant, only last year, was fined by the Fermoy Bench of Magistrates for deliberately and wantonly breaking an unfortunate man's head?

*MR. MADDEN: I have no information.

DR. TANNER: That was the case.

BOOING MR. BALFOUR.

MR. FLYNN (Cork) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention had been called to the statement of his secretary, that "no person had ever been prosecuted either for cheering a popular patriot, or booing Mr. Balfour"; that at the last Petty Sessions in Newmarket, County Cork, a number of young men were summoned for being "guilty of conduct directly tending to scandalize the authorities, and to create contempt and disrespect for the law, and provoke a breach of the peace"; that the sole evidence given of a criminatory character was that two or more policemen swore that the defendants "cheered for Mr. O'Brien," and "booed for Mr. Balfour"; and if he would inform the House fully of what occurred at the Newmarket Petty Sessions?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): My attention was called to this statement by the hon. and learned Member for Longford. It is, I believe, accurate. While the police were conveying a drunken man to barracks, a mob collected and began to hiss and boo the police and call them names. They made use, among other expressions, of those mentioned in the Question. The sentiments uttered were innocent, and possibly even laudable; but this does not of itself render legal an attempt to bring the law into contempt, or provoke a breach of the peace under the circumstances which I have described.

MR. FLYNN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say if it was the case that a number of young men were returning from a football match, and on entering the village, accompanied by a band, one of them in a moment of hilarity called out "Cheers for O'Brien" and was promptly arrested by two policemen; that he walked quietly to gaol and was kept in custody until the day of the prosecution; that the District Inspector proceeded to state the case; but the Resident Magistrate who was present or—

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now making a counter statement: if he wishes to elicit further information he should give notice of a question in the usual way.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask if there was a crowd, why were only two proceeded against? Were the booing and cheering the *gravamen* of the offence?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No; certainly not the *gravamen* of the offence. I answered the particular question on the Paper.

MR. FLYNN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in this particular case the prosecution was withdrawn?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member calls it a prosecution. I believe it was simply binding over to good behaviour.

AUSTRALIAN POST CARDS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General whether he was aware that since the 1st of January last, the Australian Governments had issued 2d. post-cards for England; why 2d. post-cards for Australia were not yet on sale at the post-offices in this country; and, pending the issue of special post-cards for Australia, what arrangement had been made to enable the public to take advantage of that facility for cheap correspondence?

*SIR H. MAXWELL: I have seen specimens of the Australian post-cards. Twopenny post-cards are already on sale at all post-offices in the United Kingdom, and are available for Australia by the long sea route. The design of a 3d.

post-card has just been approved, and orders have been given for its manufacture. Pending the issue of these new cards, the present cards used for inland and foreign transmission are being used, the postage being made up by attaching additional stamps. A post office notice on this subject was issued in December last, and the public avail themselves freely of the arrangement.

LOANS UNDER THE CROFTERS' ACT.

Mr. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland) asked the Lord Advocate whether the conditions on which loans were made to fishermen under the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act had recently been changed, so that instead of nine-tenths of the price of fishing boats being advanced as formerly seven-tenths only are now advanced; and, if so, whether it was intended to revert to the former condition of nine-tenths; and, whether applications for loans made as long ago as October of last year are still not disposed of, thus causing much inconvenience to applicants?

*The **LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): Some delay has taken place in dealing with these applications. The Fishery Board suggested there should be a modification of the existing rule as to the proportion of amount advanced. The proposal was that seven-tenths instead of nine-tenths should be the maximum. But the Secretary for Scotland has now decided that no such alteration shall be made, and the Board will now proceed to dispose of the applications, exercising their discretion under the existing rule. It is hoped that no further delay will occur.

IRELAND—THE FALCARRAGH PRISONERS.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it was proved, at the recent trial of the Falcarragh prisoners before Judge Johnson, that a scandalous riot took place at the evictions in the presence of military and police, lasting over an hour, in which the emergency men, led by the agent of Mr. Olphert, kept up a fusilade of stones at the defenders of the houses whenever any of them appeared near a window opening; if it was also proved that the emergency men on the same occasion took possession of the mail car, turning off the passengers, and throwing the parcel post baskets on the road; whether these evictions were carried out by irresponsible bailiffs, without the intervention of the sheriffs; and, were these evictions carried out with the sanction of the Government; and, if not, would he withhold the forces of the Crown in all such cases, unless the decrees for possession were entrusted to the sheriffs?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that it was proved at the recent trial of the Falcarragh prisoners at the Assizes that a riot and unlawful assembly took place on the part of a body of men who had assembled in a house in which a decree for possession was about to be carried out; that they stoned and otherwise assaulted the bailiffs and seriously wounded a police sergeant with a pitchfork. It was also proved that some of the special bailiff's assistants threw stones at the barricaded windows to keep back the men inside from stoning one of their comrades who was endeavouring to effect an entrance. The agent, I understand, took no part in the stone-throwing. It also appears that it was not true that the emergency men took possession of the mail car, or interfered with it in any way. The evictions appear to have been carried out by a special bailiff and his assistants under decree issued by the magistrates. The landlord, under the Land Law Act of 1887, is entitled to have the warrant addressed to the Sheriff of the Court, or to a special bailiff, at his option.

FOYNES PIER.

Mr. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the Foynes Pier having silted up, is unapproachable by vessels except at high water; whether the Railway Company and the Steamship Company between them provided a barge connected with the pier by a landing stage which enabled passengers and goods to embarked and disembarked at all states of the tide; whether the barge and landing stage have recently been removed by the peremptory order of the Board of Works; whether he is aware that a large traffic is carried every summer by railway to Foynes, and thence per steamer to the Lower Shannon ports, which will be put a stop to by the absence of the appliances which have been removed; and, will those appliances be restored, or will the Board of Works add to the pier a suitable jetty carried into deep water?

*MR. JACKSON: I am informed that the pier is unapproachable except at high water. The landing stage and barge were placed at the end of the pier by the Railway and Steamship Companies entirely for their own passenger and goods service and was removed by the Board of Works solely because these Companies declined to enter into a reasonable agreement to protect the Board's rights and those of the public. If they execute such an agreement for the coming season the barge and stage can be replaced by them, and the considerable traffic by which these Companies benefit will be fully accommodated. There are no harbour funds available for placing a jetty at the end of the pier for the benefit of the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company.

MR. MURPHY: May I ask whether the arrangement, said to be a reasonable one, and which the Railway Company refused to enter into, had relation to a portion of the property—the large net—which did not belong to the Company, and over which they had no control. Was that a reasonable arrangement?

*MR. JACKSON: I cannot answer that question without further inquiry, but I am informed that the Company removed the pier and barge of their own motion on a previous occasion, and it was only when they sought permission to put them back that the Board of Works called attention to the matter. I believe it is a matter that might easily be settled by arrangement.

THE SHERIFF DEPUTE OF CAITHNESS.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate whether it was the case that Mr. Thoms, Sheriff Depute of Caithness, while sitting on the Bench at Wick and dealing with a case, Weir against Weir, which had been appealed to him from the Sheriff Substitute, abstracted 18 pages or thereby of the written evidence taken before the Sheriff Substitute in the case; whether Mr. Thoms cast said pages aside and destroyed them, stitching up the remaining evidence; if so, was Mr. Thoms entitled to act in such a way; and, if he was not so entitled to act, what steps did the Lord Advocate intend taking in the circumstances.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am informed by the Sheriff that the statements in the question are not correct. The Sheriff Depute considered that a certain part of the evidence was so irrelevant to the action, that it ought not to form part of the proceedings, and as this evidence was comprised in one sheet of four pages, an amendment was effected by the excision of the sheet. It is within the competence of the Sheriff to remove from the record palpably irrelevant matter, and this is generally done by deletion; but I do not consider that the method adopted in this case was illegal.

MR CALDWELL: I suppose it is not denied that these pages were destroyed. May I ask, is it competent for a sheriff or a judge to take out and destroy part of the proceedings in a case so that it cannot be used in a Court of Appeal?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am informed that the sheriff did not destroy the portion taken out. As I have said, the ordinary method of effecting a formal removal is by deletion, and I think that is preferable.

MR. CALDWELL again asked if the portion abstracted would be available?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I do not quite know what is meant. Does the hon. Member wish to know if the paper is in existence? I am informed that it is missing, but that the sheriff did not destroy it.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): If there should be an appeal to a Court of Session, what is to be done in such a case?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: That is one of the inconveniences from which I consider it is preferable to delete.

TROOPS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) asked the Secretary of State for War, what were the numbers of Her Majesty's troops in Ireland on the 1st of March 1887, 1888, and 1889?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In March, 1887, there were 25,933 men of Her Majesty's troops stationed in Ireland of all ranks; in March, 1888, there were

27,546; and in the present month, 27,010. The variation in numbers has resulted only from the greater or less degree in which recruiting has replaced the drafts for foreign service.

POLICE PASSES IN GWEEDORE.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in addition to the "passes" issued by Sergeant Mahony, R.I.C., in the district of Gweedore, others have been issued by Head Constable C. M. M'Carthy; and, by whose authority this head constable is acting?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed by the Constabulary Authorities that Head Constable M'Carthy did issue some passes to persons proceeding from an island where there was reason to believe persons implicated in the murder of Inspector Martin were concealed. The constable acted upon his own authority.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: If I assure the right hon. Gentleman, as I do, that I hold in my hand a number of such passes, granted on several days in Donegal, will he make further inquiry and stop these proceedings?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that nobody denies that such passes were issued, and I do not know that the hon. Member advances the matter by showing the actual pieces of paper. I will make any further inquiry desired.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): What has become of the right of freedom of movement in this part of the kingdom for Her Majesty's lieges who have not received these passes?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the right hon. Gentleman can adduce instances of people who have been stopped in any lawful movement, he will have some ground for asking the question, but as far as I know, no such case can be adduced.

LIABILITY FOR POOR'S RATE.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board in Ireland has a discretionary power to amend the existing regulation, that when premises were occupied on the day when the Poor's Rate was struck, the owner of such premises, or any subsequent occupier, became responsible for a full year's rate, though the said premises might have been vacant for nearly the whole of the period for which such rate was charged; and whether, if the law as it now stands establishes this liability of vacant premises, he would undertake to introduce a measure which would conform the incidence of liability to that which regulates the payment of Income Tax and municipal rates, which are only collectable for such periods as the owners or occupiers have enjoyed a beneficial interest in the premises liable to the payment of such rates and taxes?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Local Government Board has not any discretionary power as to the rating liability of vacant premises. The rating and the liability to pay the rate are regulated by statute, under which (unless where the lessor is rated) the actual occupier at the time of the rate is liable, and on his default the person subsequently in occupation, who, however, if the payment is made by him after two months from the making of the rate, may deduct the entire amount from the rent payable to his landlord. I do not know that it is desirable to introduce legislation such as is suggested.

SHERIFF CLERK DEPUTES AND PROCURATORS FISCAL.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Lord Advocate the advisability of taking steps to secure that in future, so far as practicable, especially in a district such as Lanarkshire, Sheriff Clerk Deputes be either enrolled law agents or have served apprenticeships, and have attended, or are attending, law classes with the view of qualifying for being law agents, and whether he will see that in the appointment of Procurators Fiscal the same rule is observed when the Fiscalship at Hamilton was to be filled up; and, if there was any truth in the rumour that such an important place as Airdrie was to be amalgamated with a minor burgh such as Hamilton, and an assistant Procurator Fiscal only be appointed for Airdrie, the principal Fiscal being at Hamilton?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson): I fully concur with the hon. Member that Sheriff Clerk Deputes and Procurators Fiscal should, so far as practicable, be qualified in the manner suggested in the question. As regards Sheriff Clerk Deputes, their appointment and the responsibility for the proper performance of their duties rest with the Sheriff Clerk, who, for his own sake if for no other reason, would take care, when it is practicable, to appoint a qualified person. As regards Procurators Fiscal, I am not aware of any instance of an appointment being made when the person appointed was not properly qualified. The Procurator Fiscalship of Hamilton will, it is expected, be filled up within a few days. There is no truth in the rumour that the Fiscalship of Airdrie and Hamilton are to be amalgamated.

PICKETING AMONG SCOTCH MINERS.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM asked the Lord Advocate if he could give any information as to the arrest of John Wilson, miners' agent, of Broxburn, and of John Nichol and Patrick Holmes, miners; and if the practice of "picketing" well known among Scotch miners is against the law; and, if so, which law?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: These men were arrested by the police on a charge of intimidating workmen. The facts were inquired into and found not to sustain the charge. Picketing is against the law in cases in which the pickets act in contravention of the 7th section of the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, 1875.

PERUVIAN BONDHOLDERS.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any negotiations were, or had been, going on with the Chilian Government as to their retention of territory hypothecated to the Peruvian bondholders; and, if so, whether he could state if a satisfactory result was likely to be arrived at?

Sir JAMES FERGUSSON: Communications have passed between Her Majesty's Government and that of Chili with respect to the interference by the latter with the proposed settlement by Peru of her liabilities to the Peruvian bondholders; but Chili has not yet consented to the commencement of negotiations with reference to the obligations of Chili to the bondholders arising from the cession to that country by Peru of the province of Tarapaca, in which are situated the deposits of guano hypothecated by Peru to the bondholders?

Mr. ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Perhaps I may be allowed to refer to a question I put last year relating to a loan then being brought out by the Chilian Government, and the hypothecation of the guano contained in this identical district already hypothecated to the Peruvian bondholders. I wish to ask whether the Chilian Government has paid any attention to representations made? I withdrew the question at the time on a promise that the Chilian Government would do everything they possibly could to facilitate arrangements with the Peruvian bondholders

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I think my hon. Friend had better give notice of his question.

THE CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT AT LIVERPOOL.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN (Monaghan, S.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether Mr. Murray, deputy chairman, Board of Customs, recently visited Liverpool, and reprimanded certain officers, and ordered their removal to other ports; whether the same gentleman subsequently attempted to pursue a similar course with the officers at London; and, if so, was the legality of his action on that occasion challenged; whether the Board of Customs were compelled to acknowledge the legality of the officers' agitation in London, and to withdraw from the position they had taken up; if the action of the Liverpool officers in connection with the agitation against the extension of hours in any way differed from that of their brothers in London; and, if so, in what manner; whether the order reprimanding the Liverpool officers had been cancelled, and all those who were removed under it returned to their respective stations at Liverpool; and, if not, would they be restored to their places, and at whose expense had these officers been removed; if Mr. Murray, when in Liverpool, promised the officers interested a copy of a document, read by himself to them and conveying the Board's censure, &c.; if the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Customs, afterwards, when applied to, refused the copy of the said document, and if the Secretary to the Lords of the Treasury would be good enough to lay the original document upon the Table of the House or state its contents; and whether, considering the serious conflict that had arisen, the Treasury would order an independent inquiry?

MR. JACKSON: The question at issue with regard to the action of the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Customs and that of certain members of the staff at Liverpool has been not one of law but of discipline, and I would respectfully represent to the House that it is not a matter which can be properly discussed in an answer to a question of details such as the hon. Member's question contains. The matter in dispute, I am informed, has been settled by the Board of Customs, with due regard to the interests of the Service, and, I believe, of the staff itself.

THE SAMOAN CONFERENCE.

MR. W. A. M'ARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he had seen the statement in the *Times* of Friday, March 15, that Messrs. John A. Kasson, William Walter Phelps, and George H. Bates, had been appointed Commissioners for the United States to the Conference on Samoan affairs; whether this information was correct; and whether he could now state the names of the Commissioners who would represent this country at the Conference?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have seen the statement, but we do not know that these nominations have been confirmed by the Senate, which is necessary.

MR. W. A. M'ARTHUR said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the last paragraph of the question.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON said he had answered the same question several times. The Commissioners were not yet appointed, but the hon. Gentleman might rest assured that they would be appointed in good time.

RAILWAY RATES.

MR. FINCH (Rutland) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the Railway Companies had cancelled the rates for the carriage of Foreign as well as of Home produce, which appeared open to objection on the ground of undue preference; and if the cancelling of these special rates has had the effect of raising the charges paid for the carriage of goods which were imported from abroad?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bristol, W.): Yes; I assume, from the answers I read to the House the other day, these rates have been cancelled. If not, of course the Railway Commission will have power to adjudicate.

DR. BARR'S LETTER TO THE "TIMES."

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he had any cognizance of the letter of Dr. Barr before its publication in the *Times* newspaper?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir; I had cognizance of the letter, which, indeed, was sent to me on its way to the Press. I did not do more than make myself generally acquainted with its contents until after it appeared in print; but if I had read it in detail, I should equally have refrained from interfering with its publication, as I was under the impression that there was no impropriety in any gentleman refuting, in such manner as he might think right, errors or calumnies respecting which he has been called upon to deal, not in connection with his ordinary duties as a servant of the Government. It appears that in so doing Dr. Barr has not acted in strict accordance with the rules governing his department. In so far as there is blame attaching to him for this, it is evident that his reference to me may well have contributed to his incurring that blame.

SIR W. HARCOURT: After that answer of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, I will ask the Home Secretary whether he has reproved Dr. Barr for his conduct in publishing this letter, which appears to have been corrected by the Chief Secretary for Ireland?

MR. MATTHEWS: Dr. Barr was, no doubt, guilty of a breach of official etiquette in publishing this letter referring to matters in his department without the sanction of the head of the department. There is no connection whatever between this and the communications that passed between Dr. Barr and my right hon. Friend. The Chief Secretary had neither the power nor the inclination to absolve Dr. Barr from compliance with the official rule that governs this matter.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will lay on the the Table the correspondence now in the Home Office on the subject of this letter; and will the right hon. Gentleman state what communication has been made to Dr. Barr, and what communication he has received on the subject from Dr. Barr? I may state that I addressed a letter on this subject to the Home Secretary some days ago, and that I have received no acknowledgment or reply.

MR. MATTHEWS: My apologies are due to the right hon. Gentleman. I thought my answer in the House would be accepted as an answer to the application. I have already informed the House of the nature of my communication to Dr. Barr—namely, that I have called his attention to the official rule, and requested him to observe it in future. No one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman how contrary it would be to all practice to lay upon the Table of the House communications between a Department and its officers.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will move for that correspondence, and call attention to the conduct in this matter of the Home Office with reference to the discipline of the Home Office, on the Vote for the salaries of the medical officers of the Home Department.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps I may be allowed to correct a very singular lapse on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. I stated as clearly as I could articulate that I had not even made myself accurately acquainted with the contents of the letter, and yet the right hon. Gentleman, with that reply ringing in his ears, described the letter as one which I had corrected.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, when he received Dr. Barr's letter, what did he do with it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I sent it on.

MR. T. M. HEALY: To the *Times?*

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

ANNEXATIONS IN THE PACIFIC.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention had been called to an extract from a letter dated Tahiti, the 14th January, and published in the *Standard* of the 15th instant, stating that Her Majesty's ship *Hyacinth* had just arrived there; that

> "She came from the Hervey group, where they had hoisted the English flag on every island in the group; that the Union Jack was hoisted, 21 guns fired from the ship, 'God Save the Queen' played, and the islanders became British subjects;"

whether that statement was true, and, if so, how many islands had been annexed; whether the captain of the *Hyacinth* acted on instructions from the British Government in annexing the islands; and whether papers on the subject would be laid before Parliament?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The statement as represented in the question is substantially correct in these particulars. Between the 26th of October and the 4th of November, 1888, the captain of Her Majesty's ship *Hyacinth* declared a Protectorate over the islands composing the Cook group, which includes the Hervey group. The Union Jack was hoisted and saluted in the usual manner. There are in all nine islands included in the Protectorate. The captain was acting under instructions from the Government.

SAMOA.

DR. CAMERON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any report had yet been received at the Admiralty concerning the seizure of Mr. Gilan, a British subject, on board the British ship *Richmond* by an armed guard from the German warship *Adler* at Samoa?

LORD G. HAMILTON: A telegraphic report has been received from the Commander-in-Chief on the Australian Station from New Zealand, dated February 19, to the effect that the Germans had proclaimed martial law at Samoa, and claimed the right of search over British ships, and that British subjects (no names given) had been removed from the British ship *Richmond*, by armed boats from the German ship *Adler*. They were subsequently released on the demand of the captain of the *Royalist*. A further telegram on February 21 states that the captain of the *Calliope*, which ship has replaced the *Royalist*, had informed the German authorities at Samoa that he could not acknowledge the establishment of martial law or the jurisdiction or rights so claimed over British subjects or Courts. The claims so advanced were abandoned. No report has been received with reference to the statement quoted in the second part of the question. With regard to the latter part of the question, Captain Hand reports that a cutter belonging to the German ship *Eber* chased a boat containing unarmed natives, and fired fired upon them as they were escaping into the bush. Captain Hand, of the *Royalist*, was on the beach at the time, and hailed the German boat to call their attention to his being there, and to his being exposed to their fire. On his remonstrating with the captain of the *Eber*, that officer expressed his regret at the occurrence which had taken place contrary to the instructions he had given as to firing, and repeated the same to Captain Hand on the following day on board the *Royalist*. He further sent the officer who had committed the breach of orders to Captain Hand to apologize, and to explain that he had acted contrary to his instructions.

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION EXPENSES.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether he would grant a Return of the expenses of returning officers in connection with the County Council elections in England and Wales?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The expenses of returning officers incurred in connection with County Council elections in many instances have not as yet been taxed. At a later date I shall have no objection to assent to a Motion for such a Return as that referred to.

DOVEY FISHERY.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS asked what were the private interests which the Chief Inspector of Fisheries on the 3rd of January last stated as likely to oppose successfully a by-law of the Dovey Fishery Board to extend by a fortnight the time for net fishing in the waters within the Board's jurisdiction?

*SIR M. H. BEACH: The hon. Member is not quite accurate in stating that the Chief Inspector of Fisheries made any reference to private interests. What he did say was that the views of the fishermen would be much opposed by the more important Fishery Boards, the preservation of whose districts might be affected by further extension of the season for the capture, and consequently the sale, of salmon.

RAILWAY RATES.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether, under the powers conferred by the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, upon the Commissioners, upon application to review the action of railway companies who had raised their rates during the passage of the above Act, and prior to its coming into operation, a case is now being heard before the Commissioners; and whether it is a fact that certain railway companies have in some cases increased their rates subsequent to 1st January last; and, if so, whether it is the duty of the Board of Trade to see that no contravention of the Act takes place?

SIR M. H. BEACH: I have communicated with the Registrar to the Commissioners and am informed that there is no such case before the Commissioners. In two cases only have the Board of Trade received information of increase of rates subsequent to the 1st of January last. If any such increase is made without the giving of the prescribed notice, the company making it is liable to a penalty of £5 for each offence. Any question or dispute involving the legality of any toll, rate, or charge, or portion of a toll, rate, or charge may be brought before the Commissioners, who have jurisdiction to hear and determine the same under section 10 of the Act, and under section 31, whenever any person receiving or sending goods by any railway is of opinion that the railway company is charging him an unfair or unreasonable rate, such person may complain to the Board of Trade, who will thereupon endeavour to settle the matter amicably. The operation of clauses 10 and 31 is not suspended pending the settlement of the maximum rates under section 24.

MR. WATT: May I ask whether the 58th clause of the Act confers retrospective powers on the Commissioners only in cases where litigation was pending prior to 1st January last?

SIR M. H. BEACH: The hon. Member has given me no notice of this question.

IRELAND—COMMITTEE ON PRISON TREATMENT.

MR. FLYNN asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if the statement in the *Birmingham Post* is well founded, to the effect that the small Committee on Prison Treatment will include Mr. Bourke, Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board, Dr. McCabe, and Dr. O'Farrell; and, if the statement is not accurate, can he inform the House who are the parties who have been selected, and will he undertake that the Committee will contain members other than gentlemen who have been or are connected with prison administration in Ireland?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There is no truth in the report. I shall, of course, endeavour to make any committee or commission representative in its character.

FEMALE ATTENDANTS AT POLICE STATIONS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what appointments have been made of female attendants at Metropolitan Police Stations so as to secure for women charged during the night, and detained in custody, the protection of persons of their own sex?

MR. MATTHEWS: At all police-stations there are female attendants, who are not resident on the station premises, but who reside close by, and at night can be summond by the inspector if their services are required. There are about 200 police stations in the metropolis, and to provide quarters for resident female attendants would involve considerable structural alterations and a large expenditure of money. The hon. Member will bear in mind that Mr. Justice Wills's Committee dealt only with police courts and not with police-stations, to which none of their recommendations apply.

RESULTS FEES.

MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the results fees have yet been paid the national school teachers in the Ballaghaderreen, County Mayo, District (No. 21), whose schools were examined before the 31st January last; and whether the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have acted in accord with the pledges given on their behalf by him, that payment of results fees would be made within four weeks subsequent to date of results examination to teachers against whom no complaint had been made by the district Inspector?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that in all cases in the district named, in which the Annual Results Examinations were held before the 31st January last, the results fees have been paid with four exceptions, due to irregularities in the returns or other exceptional circumstances, but payment in these four cases will shortly issue. The Commissioners add that, in all cases, except those in which a necessity arises for special investigation, the results fees are issued within about a month from the date of the examination of the school.

CLERKS OF UNIONS.

MR. PATRICK JOSEPH O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the Government mean to bring in the Bill, as promised last Session, to provide for the service of clerks of unions and poor rate collectors in Ireland under the Franchise Act?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member appears to be under a misapprehension in supposing that a promise had been made to introduce a Bill to meet the cases of the Poor Law officials where they are at present insufficiently remunerated for their duties in question. I am, however, quite ready to introduce a Bill on the subject, if assured that it will meet with the general assent of the House.

MR. P. O'BRIEN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the late Colonel King Harman stated last year that the question had for some time occupied the attention of the Government and that a Bill would be brought in on an early date?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware that the introduction of a Bill was promised. But it is the case that the matter has engaged the attention of the

Government. A Bill has been actually drafted; but there would be no use in introducing it unless with the general assent of all parties.

PEMBA AND ZANZIBAR.

Sir J. KENNAWAY asked whether the Government had consented to unite with the German Government in a blockade of the islands of Pemba and Zanzibar in substitution of a blockade of the coast?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: No. The blockade on the coast is still in force; but, by a proclamation issued on the 19th of February, the Sultan prohibited the importation, exportation, and trade in arms and ammunition in Zanzibar and Pemba. He further delegated his Sovereign rights of search over Arab vessels in the territorial waters of the islands to the British and German Admirals.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle on-Tyne) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland at what date Mr. Horne and Mr. Joyce began to examine papers and tabulate statistics with the view to elucidate subjects of inquiry before the Special Commission; by whose authority those Resident Magistrates undertook that work; to whom they furnished the result of their labours; whether Mr. Horne, Mr. Joyce, or Mr. Shannon had at any time taken the evidence of any persons with a view of its being used by, or submitted to, the *Times*; and whether Mr. Horne obtained leave from his ordinary duties for the purpose of engaging in the work of tabulating statistics for the *Times?*

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Messrs. Horne and Joyce began the duty in question immediately after the passing of the Special Commission Act, before it was known what course the Court would direct in regard to the production of information before it. These Resident Magistrates undertook the duty by order of the Government, and furnished the results to the Government. As regards the inquiry in the fourth paragraph, my reply of the 6th of March to a question put by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool equally applies to the case of the Resident Magistrates referred to and all other Government officials in Ireland. The reply to the inquiry in the last paragraph is in the negative.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman another question. The right hon. Gentleman tells the House that the Resident Magistrates furnished the results of their labours to the Government. Will he tell us how that information from the Government reached Mr. Soames?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The information suggested in the Question was the tabulated statistics in relation to crime. If the *Times* applied for information of that kind, it would be supplied to them.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Then the *Times* did apply to the Government for this information?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I suppose so, if they got it.

Mr. J. MORLEY: How did they know it existed?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know that they were aware that tabulation had taken place; but they probably knew that information of the sort was in the hands of the Government.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Div.): May I ask whether it was by instructions from the Government that Mr. Shannon held a sworn inquiry into the conduct of the convict Delaney in the prison cell, and whether there was any legal authority for the holding of such an inquiry?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I know nothing about the matter, which is not relevant to the question before the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Has not Mr. Horne, a Resident Magistrate of the third class, been promoted over the heads of a score of others in consequence of the assistance he rendered to the *Times?*

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): Are we to understand that the tabulating of statistics for the *Times* is among the ordinary duties of a Resident Magistrate?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I deny that statistics were tabulated for the *Times.*

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that Mr. Horne has been recently promoted?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, I do not. What I denied was the account given of that promotion by the hon. and learned Gentleman.

MR. T. M. HEALY: What promotion has Mr. Horne received, when did he receive it, and over whose heads has he been promoted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member must be aware I cannot possibly answer the question.

A LICENSING IRREGULARITY.

MR. CAINE (Barrow) asked the Attorney General whether he had received a memorial stating that Mr. Thomas Sowler, a Justice of the Peace for Manchester, had committed a breach of the 60th section of the Licensing Act of 1872 by sitting on the Bench at a licensing session, when application was made for the renewal or transfer of a licence for a house belonging to a limited company in which he was a shareholder; and what steps he proposed to take in the matter?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): A memorial was received substantially to the effect stated in the question of the hon. Member. In consequence, I directed proceedings to be taken for a penalty, since which I have received a statement from Mr. Sowler stating that he acted from inadvertence and ignorance of the law. I have been in communication with the solicitor of the petitioner, and the matter is having my most careful consideration.

ROYAL GRANTS.

MR. E. ROBERTSON asked the First Lord of the Treasury when he would place on the Paper the terms of the proposed reference to the Committee on Royal Grants?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand): I will place on the Paper the terms of the proposed reference as soon as the condition of business affords me a reasonable prospect of being able to proceed with the Motion for the Committee.

INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CONVENTION.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield Central) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Spanish Government had formally invited the International Industrial Convention to hold its Session at Madrid as proposed; and if the date of its assembly has been fixed?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No formal invitation has yet been received, and the date has, so far as Her Majesty's Government are aware, not yet been fixed.

LONDON EXCISE.

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) asked whether there was any truth in the statement that some of the London Excise collectors' offices are to be abolished, and the duties of the clerks merged in the office of the Receiver General of Inland Revenue; and whether that arrangement would result in any economy?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: A scheme is under the consideration of the Board of Inland Revenue to transfer part of the work now done in the London collectors' offices to the Receiver General. Nothing is definitely settled; but economy is the object of the proposed arrangement.

PRISON TREATMENT OF MR. W. O'BRIEN.

MR. GLADSTONE (Mid Lothian): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, a direct issue of fact having been raised between the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the Lord Mayor of Dublin in relation to the prison treatment of Mr. W. O'Brien, and an inquiry into this matter by Committee of the House having been proposed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin and rejected by Her Majesty's Government on the ground, not that the inquiry is improper, but that the organ is inappropriate, Her Majesty's Government will propose an inquiry by what they may deem an appropriate organ?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The inquiry by Committee was rejected on the ground that the instrument was inappropriate; but even if an appropriate instrument were provided (not a very easy matter) it would not follow that the inquiry should be granted. The right hon. Gentleman must be aware that conflicts of this kind on matter of fact have been frequent under many Administrations, and that the mere occurrence of such a conflict has not been, and could not be, thought in most cases an adequate reason for setting in motion the elaborate machinery necessary for an inquiry on oath. But in order that the right hon. Gentleman may have an opportunity of estimating the evidence on which my statements were founded, I propose to lay Papers on the Table of the House, which I feel sure he would wish to see before asking for an inquiry, or otherwise associating himself with the doubts expressed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

MR. SEXTON: With reference to the reply of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the question of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary whether the machinery necessary for inquiry is not already created by the 11th section of the Irish Prisons Act, 1877? I for one do not intend to suffer him again in my presence to impute untruths to the hon. Member for North-East Cork and others, including myself, with regard to statements which we know to be true, and which we have offered to prove. I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is willing, as the Prisons Board is bound by statute, to direct them to hold such an inquiry as contemplated by the section, upon oath, and to allow each of the prisoners to be represented by counsel, and the Press to be admitted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must correct one statement of the hon. Member. He appears to think that whenever I make an assertion in this House upon information given to me with regard to matters of fact, and whenever hon. Members opposite happen to differ from that statement, I am giving them the lie. I made no such statement against the hon. Gentleman or his Friends below the Gangway. With regard to his request that there should be an inquiry on oath, I was not aware that the kind of inquiry granted by the section would satisfy hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, or was the inquiry to which the question of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian pointed. If it would satisfy them, that would put an entirely different complexion on the matter.

MR. SEXTON: Our side of the case rests upon the statement made by the hon. Member for North-East Cork to my hon. Friends the Mayor of Clonmel and the Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy). I, therefore, ask whether the right hon. Gentleman intends to go on imputing untruths to hon. Members of this House? [*Cries of* "Order."]

*MR. SPEAKER: A charge of imputing untruth is in itself un-Parliamentary.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman grant an inquiry? [*Cries of* "Order" and "Withdraw."] I am quite in order. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will grant an inquiry. [*Renewed cries of* "Withdraw" and "Order."] Withdraw what? I withdraw nothing. Will the right hon. Gentleman grant an inquiry?

*MR. SPEAKER: I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will agree with the propriety of the remark which I made to him from the Chair. All I said was that a charge of imputing untruth is not Parliamentary.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman grant an inquiry under the Prisons Act (Ireland), 1877? Will he make such an inquiry effective by having it on oath, with both parties represented by counsel and the Press admitted?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course I cannot off-hand answer a proposal of that kind. Before I give an answer to that question I should like to know whether an inquiry of that kind would meet the views which I understand are held by the right hon. Gentleman opposite and by hon. Members below the Gangway.

MR. GLADSTONE: Although I entirely dissent from the grounds upon which the objection has been taken to an inquiry by a Parliamentary Committee, yet, undoubtedly, any inquiry which fully brings out the facts will meet my views, and, I believe, those of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. As reference has been made to conversations which took place, I may ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is in his recollection—as it certainly is distinctly in mine—that he described statements made by the Lord Mayor of Dublin by the phrase "calumny."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My memory does not carry me back to that particular speech to which the right hon. Gentleman refers; but I think it is very likely that I have in this House—certainly out of it—described the attacks to which I have been subjected on the question of prison discipline as calumny.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

COLONEL LAURIE (Bath): I wish to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office a Question of which I have given him private notice—whether he is correctly reported in the *Daily News* of Saturday last, under the heading "More Ministerial Bribes," to have given the details of orders to be issued under the new Naval Programme, and to have stated that more than £1,000,000 worth of stores would be ordered, including Messrs. Armstrong £360,000, Messrs. Whitworth £257,000, Messrs. Vickers £114,000?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): I fear, Sir, that the *Daily News* has been wilfully misled. The report is wholly inaccurate. I made no allusion whatever to orders which may hereafter be given under the proposed naval expenditure. The figures which I cited were those of orders at present current, which have been given out in the past, and were a quotation from the speech delivered by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War on Thursday night, which was public property 24 hours before I spoke on Friday.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I would ask the hon. Gentleman whether he is acquainted with a paper called the *Manchester Courier*, and whether he acknowledges the accuracy of this report of his speech—

> "They believed very much in stimulating private trade. In 1883-4 the Liberal Government gave to private firms orders for big guns to the value of £23,000; in 1886 such orders were given to the extent of £67,000, but in this year orders for big guns were given to Messrs. Armstrong to the extent of £381,000, to Messrs. Whitworth to the extent of £258,000, and to Messrs. Vickers, of Sheffield, to the extent of £114,000. In all, the War Office have given orders for £1,063,000 worth of warlike stores to private firms."

MR. BRODRICK: The right hon. Gentleman has not had the courtesy to give me notice. I have no report of the speech with me. I certainly read very cursorily the quotation which he has read, and the citation which I made was to the effect that these orders were at present current. But if the right hon. Gentleman feels that there is any difference between the two Governments in that respect it is not due to any fault of mine.

THE GENERALS' LIST.

SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): With reference to a Motion which I have on the paper for to-morrow, and with reference to the statement made last week, as to the Generals' List, I would ask in what state of maturity that proposal of the Government is, because if it is very near production I would not trouble the House with my Motion.

*****MR. E. STANHOPE**: I informed the House last week that I had a scheme in preparation, and I hope to be able to lay it before the House in the course of a few days, certainly in the course of a week, and, therefore, I may say in answer to the right hon. baronet that it will be produced almost immediately.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

MR. GATHORNE-HARDY (Kent, Medway) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether it was true, as stated in the public Press, that the authorities of the National Gallery were applying a new and fanciful nomenclature to the pictures there; and, if so, whether he would direct that the old and well-known names of the painters be also affixed to them?

*****MR. W. H. SMITH**: The changes which, in a very few instances, have been made on the labels of pictures in the National Gallery consist merely in the substitution of the true name of the painter for the colloquial nickname. This has been done in anticipation of the appearance of the forthcoming catalogue, in which the system of nomenclature will agree with that now almost universal in the great Continental galleries and in their catalogues. It would, no doubt, have been better in all cases where an alteration was necessary to have left the old name also standing, and in some instances this has been done. The sole reason for not doing it in every case was the desire to avoid the expense of new labels, and it was hoped that no great inconvenience would be felt from the omission, since it has been made solely when the painter's surname was as perfectly well-known to the general public as the

Christian name or the nickname. It is, however, intended to restore the more familiar names to the labels, so as to save any inconvenience.

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether he has received copies of the resolutions passed at the Indian National Congress held at Allahabad in December 1888, embodying a tentative scheme of election of a moiety of members of legislative councils; and (2) whether he will lay the same upon the Table, together with such portions of the despatch from the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, relating to the reform of the legislative councils in India, as contain proposals, suggestions, and observations on the modifications in the existing system?

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA** (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham) answered the first question in the negative, and, as regards the second said that no Papers on the constitution and functions of the legislative councils in India could, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, be at present laid upon the Table with advantage to the Public Service.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Can they be laid upon the Table before the Indian question comes on for discussion in this House?

***Sir J. GORST**: I am afraid that I cannot name any day when the papers will be laid on the Table.

INDIAN HONOURS.

Mr. CAINE asked the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether Mr. Josiah Whymper, who was gazetted as Companion of the Indian Empire in the recent distribution of honours, was the manager of a brewery company at Murree. If so, what were the services rendered by him to the Indian Empire which induced the Government of India to recommend him to the honour; and (2) whether it was a fact that Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander-in Chief of the forces in India, a short time ago recommended Mr. J. Gelson Gregson, lately the secretary of the Soldiers' Total Abstinence Society, for a similar honour, expressing the opinion that Mr. Gregson's great services had resulted in an increase of sobriety and good conduct among the soldiers stationed in India, equal in its results to the addition of a regiment to the forces in India?

***Sir J. GORST**: My answer to the first question is, yes; he was recommended for honours by the Viceroy—

> "On account of his public spirit in developing the local resources in the Rawul Pindi district, and on account of his services to the military department."

(2) As regards Mr. Gregson, the Secretary of State is not aware of any such recommendation having been made by Sir F. Roberts; nor has any such recommendation been made to the Secretary of State by the Viceroy.

THE POLICE AND THE UNEMPLOYED

Mr. C. GRAHAM asked the Home Secretary whether his attention had been called to a statement in this morning's Press to the effect that after a parade of Jewish unemployed to hear a sermon by Dr. Adler on Saturday last, the police broke into the Jewish Socialist Club in Berners Street, and arrested four men and severely beat the steward?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have seen the statement in the Press, but have received no official information.

Mr. C. GRAHAM: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiry?

THE KENNINGTON ELECTION.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I wish to ask a question affecting the position of a Member of this House. An election took place on Friday last for the borough of Kennington, when a Member was returned to this House, and the poll was declared on Friday night. Under the Parliamentary and Municipal Elections Act, 1872, the duty of the Returning Officer is forthwith to declare as the Member elected the candidate to whom the majority of votes has been given, and to return his name to the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery. Now, inquiries have been made by the Member returned of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, in order that he might obtain the writ and take his seat as being returned by the constituency of Kennington, but it appears the Clerk of the Crown has received no return from the Returning Officer, the consequence of which is that the Member returned is unable to take his seat or to discharge his duties in this House. I would ask you under these circumstances what steps ought to be taken in order that the Member for Kennington may enter this House?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I did not know that the right hon. Gentleman was going to ask me the question, but I recollect that a case occurred in 1848, when the question arose as to whether the absence of the writ would invalidate the hon. Member's being a Member of the House. The Committee decided that it would not affect the election nor invalidate his being regarded as a Member of the House, but the Committee added—I speak from recollection—that they were strongly of opinion that the practice of obtaining the writ should hold in the future before an hon. Member could take his seat. Why the writ has not been returned in this case has not come to my knowledge, and I have only heard of it within the last five minutes. Until the writ arrives, it will not be competent for the hon. Member to take his seat, the practice being for an hon. Member to bring the writ with him from the Clerk of the Crown. I may say that I will call on the Clerk of the Crown to explain any irregularity that has taken place, and ask him why the writ has not been returned.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I understood that some half hour ago steps were taken to communicate to you, Sir, that a Question would be asked on this subject, and I have to apologize to you that that has not been done. I do not understand, however, from the information which reaches me, that there is any fault on the part of the Clerk of the Crown. It is the duty of the returning officer to send the writ to the Clerk of the Crown. The Clerk of the Crown has not got the writ, and I do not see what the Member is to do in the circumstances.

*Mr. SPEAKER: My first duty would be to ask the Clerk of the Crown the circumstances of the case, and then to take action through Chancery, if any irregularity has been committed. That I will certainly do at once.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the event of the writ arriving in the course of the evening, will the hon. Member for Kennington be able to take the oath?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Not until the close of the business. When the Orders of the Day are commenced it is not allowable to interrupt the public business for the purpose of allowing a hon. Member to take the oath or his seat.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I wish to ask whether contracts for the supply of the public service are not made in accordance purely with the public convenience and not from political considerations; and if that be so, whether the First Lord of the Treasury will consider it his duty to stop the growing practice on the part of the supporters of the Government of asking the support at contested elections of the constituency, on the ground of the selection of the constituency for the supply of the public service?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware, Sir, that any supporter of the Government has asked for the support of any constituency on the ground that a special contract has been given out to any particular district. Undoubtedly contracts are given out in the interests of the public service, and of the public service alone. There would be no justification for giving out any contract unless the public service required it. In all these cases the parties concerned were obviously the fittest persons to execute the contract.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: Following upon the answer of the right hon. Gentlemen, I would ask whether he is not aware that in the election at Govan another subordinate Member of the Government did give forth, as a reason for supporting the Tory candidate, that the Government intended to give a large amount of orders to the shipbuilding firms of the country, including those of Govan, and whether he is not of opinion that the mention of this fact, as well as of the similar fact mentioned by the Financial Secretary for the War Department in the course of a political address at a contested election, did not hold out the idea that their selection of a candidate would regulate the selection of contracts by the Government.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware of the facts to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I would venture to suggest that the conduct of any hon. Member of this House, be he a Member of the Government or not, is called in question, it would be well to give him notice.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that my Question, with regard to the Financial Secretary, followed upon the Question put to him by one of his colleagues on the Tory side.

IRELAND—VISITS TO PRISONERS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman, before there is any Vote taken for the Civil Service, whether he can give us any information as to any permits which may have been issued, since the passing of the Special Commission Act, to visit a prisoner in Chatham Prison, namely, John Davey, convicted of a dynamite outrage. Has he issued any permit to any person, not connected with the public service, to see that prisoner?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Perhaps the hon. and learned Member will put the Question upon the Paper?

THE COURSE OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I wish to make a statement to the House with reference to the course of public business. There stands on the paper for to-night the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates and the Vote on Account for the Civil Service. I have been informed that it is not probable that the Vote on account will be taken in a single night, and in these circumstances, as we have some important Supplementary Estimates to consider this evening, which, however, ought not to occupy the whole of the evening, it will be my duty to move to-morrow at 2 o'clock that Supply for these services take precedence of all other Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day until it be concluded. We are under the necessity of concluding the Vote on Account at the latest on Thursday, in order that it be included in the Financial Bill for the current year. As I stated in the House a few days ago, grave irregularity would occur if the provision for the Civil Service were not included in the Statute passed before the end of the financial year, and that view has been since confirmed by the remonstrance of a high financial authority, the Controller and Auditor General.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to say, in consequence of the notice which has been given by the right hon. Gentleman, and in view of the fact that the Navy Vote for money was delayed by the action of the Gentleman's own supporters on Thursday evening, I shall oppose his Motion and take a Division upon it.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Will the hon. Gentleman say how it was delayed?

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I was present when the Vote on the Navy Supplementary Estimates was taken unchallenged; and I was present when the Vote for the men was taken unchallenged; and I was present when the Vote for money was delayed by four speeches from the Conservative side; I was present when they were made—before any kind of opposition was made on this side of the House.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. G. J. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I, too, was present, and after 11 o'clock, when there was plenty of time to have proceeded, Member after Member rose below the Gangway opposite. Hon. Members will remember the protest that I made. [*Interruption.*] I am replying to a challenge made by the hon. Member for Northampton——

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Well, the right hon. Gentleman——

*Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the House that there is no Question before the House.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS IN IRELAND.

Dr. TANNER (Mid Cork): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any representations from Ballincolig with reference to the widespread destitution which will ensue in consequence of Army Contracts going elsewhere?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member had better put the Question down for to-morrow.

Dr. TANNER: I wish to know whether these representations, pressed upon him by all classes of the community, and by clergymen of all denominations in reference to the contracts going elsewhere, and the distress which will come, will be considered?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: I have not the slightest idea what the Question is about. Will the hon. Gentleman put it down for to-morrow?

THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE BAHAMAS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green): I wish to ask the learned Attorney General, whether he was correctly reported in the statement attributed to him, that the Chief Justice of the Bahamas had been removed from his office.

***Sir R. WEBSTER**: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for affording me the opportunity of giving an explanation of what I said. I was not aware of the statement attributed to me until to-day. What I stated to the House—although I daresay I was not correctly heard—was that the Chief Justice was removeable, not removed. I really referred to the answer of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for the Colonies in which he said that the Chief Justice could be suspended by the Governor and Council until the Home Authorities had considered the case. I did not intend to say he had been removed.

MOTIONS.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (TONNAGE) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Measurement of the Tonnage of Merchant Ships, ordered to be brought in by Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Baron Henry De Worms.

Bill presented and read first time. (Bill 162.)

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889, the sum of £90,091, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, the sum of £9,267,300, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again To-morrow at Two of the clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1888-9.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class III.

(1.) Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889, for certain Expenses of the Law Agent in Scotland for Government Departments."

THE SKYE DISTURBANCES—CONDUCT OF SHERIFF IVORY.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): There is a matter in connection with this Vote to which I desire to call the attention of the House, especially with regard to the action of the Government who, first of all refused to allow the payment, and then, without any change in the circumstances, authorized it to be made. The right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate, in assenting to this course on the part of the Government, referred with something like bitterness of feeling to the action taken by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) in regard to this matter, and the leading organ of the Government in Scotland—the *Scotsman*—also took up the subject matter. Alluding to the speech made by the Lord Advocate upon the subject the *Scotsman* says—

"The Lord Advocate in replying to Dr. Cameron told him pretty flatly, that if he said outside what he had said inside that Chamber, he would have been open to an action for defamation. It is not a very manly or straightforward proceeding for a Member of the House of Commons to shelter himself under the privilege that his Membership confers to slander an honest public official. There was gross lawlessness in Skye. Dr. Cameron and some others were giving their approval to the men who were guilty of that lawlessness, and when it was checked by the firm action of Sheriff Ivory they turned their anger upon him. . . . A more dastardly and mean proceeding was never witnessed."

When attacks of that kind are adopted by the Government after having been made by the organs of the Government, it need hardly be wondered at if debates on the subject dealt with are entered upon by the Scotch Members with considerable earnestness. I may here say that I do not call in question the statement of the facts of the case made by Sheriff Ivory. I will assume that every statement of fact he has made is correct; and, further, I will not add to the facts which he himself has introduced. The case I have to bring forward is one which has been characterized by most unconstitutional action on the part of Sheriff Ivory, and has led to a good deal of discussion both at public meetings and in the Press throughout Scotland. There can be no question as to the illegality of the course adopted by Sheriff Ivory, the result being that the parties who felt themselves aggrieved adopted the Constitutional course of bringing his conduct before the tribunals of the country by actions against him for damages. The law has, as we all know, provided the greatest possible protection for what is done by any Scotch official in the discharge of his duty, and this, of course, fully covers anything legally done in the discharge of the duty of a Sheriff or Judge; and I venture to say that no more prudent advice could be given in a question such as this than to throw aside anything in the nature of bickering or agitation, and to have the question of the legality of the Sheriff's proceedings made the subject of discussion in a Court of Law. In this case there were two action for damages founded on the alleged illegal action on the part of the Sheriff. One of these, brought by a person named Beaton, was successfully defended by the Sheriff, who succeeded in traversing the suit by a plea of privilege; but in the other action, which was brought by a person named Norman Stewart, the Sheriff, finding it prudent to compromise the matter, did so by paying £5 damages, and the expenses, amounting to £200, which payment has now been sanctioned by the Treasury. Now, I wish to ask, is the Treasury prepared to aver that the Sheriff in this case had not acted outside his duty and functions? My own opinion is that the position of the Crown in this matter is very clear. When they were asked to defend the action brought against Sheriff Ivory they said—

> "I am to inform you that the Crown cannot undertake your defence in this civil suit, such a suit would not be relevant unless the pursuer can aver that you, as a sheriff, in ordering his arrest had either gone outside the law in some flagrant manner in matter of procedure, or had, though within the law in procedure, acted maliciously and without probable cause. The Lord Advocate has no doubt that you will be able to defend yourself against either of these charges, and, if so, you will gain your case and be found entitled to expenses. It would be matter for consideration whether, if the expenses so awarded proved irrecoverable from the pursuer, the Treasury should not reimburse you; but it would not be regular for the Crown to take up your defence or in any way to guarantee your costs at present."

That is the course that was then adopted and it amounted to this—

> "You, as sheriff, if your action has been regular, will succeed in defending the case, and if you are unable to recover the costs you are put to from the pursuer, the Crown will pay."

But the action brought by Norman Stewart was on account of the Sheriff having published a confidential report or letter from the Lord Advocate, which contained a serious reflection on one of the parties to proceedings then pending, that party being spoken of as a "Ringleader of the mob." The right hon Gentleman opposite now represents the case as simply one of the mode of publication, and says that it would have been competent to the sheriff to have published that report in some other manner. In all such actions for damages the same thing might be said; it could always be said that the defender might have gained the end sought by some legal and Constitutional method. But I assume that in the action against the sheriff, that official adopted an illegal and un-Constitutional course whereby he subjected himself to the consequences, and I ask whether, when a legal and constitutional course was open to him, the Crown and the country are to pay for the consequences of his having adopted an illegal and unconstitutional one? Is this money to be paid to a Sheriff who knows the law, or who gets a large salary for being supposed to know the law he administers, and yet who acted without excuse in adopting a course that was neither legal nor constitutional? This is not the case of a Government subordinate having by a technical misconstruction of the law done that which amounts to a breach of the law; it is the case of one who is in the position of a judge, and who, therefore, ought to know what the law is. It has also been stated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite that the document I have referred to as improperly published by the Sheriff might have been laid on the Table of the House by the Home Secretary. But this House naturally expects that the Home Secretary will act like a man possessing something like prudence and common sense, and I venture to say that, looking at the character of the document, no Home Secretary would ever have laid it on the Table of the House. But beyond this, we have the fact before us that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir William Harcourt), who was then Home Secretary, refused to lay the document on the Table, and it is, therefore, no argument to say that he might have done so. It is also said that the document might have been sent to the Commissioners of Supply, and there seems to be some doubt as to whether it was or was not so sent. The Lord Advocate seems to imply that it was not; though I understand that it was. But just look at the facts. This man Norman Stuart was under the charge of having been the ringleader of a mob, and this charge was pending against him at the time Sheriff Ivory caused the statement to be published in the newspapers that he was the ringleader of the mob; and, that being so, and the charge being one that was pending in Sheriff Ivory's own Court, the man being acquitted in March, the right hon. Gentleman now argues that the Sheriff might have published the report in April—which was after the trial had taken place and the man had been acquitted. Our case is, however, that Sheriff Ivory, knowing the charge was pending against the man, goes and publishes a report stating that he was the ringleader of the mob. Did the right hon. Gentleman ever see a grosser piece of irregularity than that? I venture to say that the Judge who did an act of that kind, who published that which he was not entitled to make public, ought not to receive approval at the hands of any Government. But that is not all the illegality complained of. Sheriff Ivory told the Lord Advocate he would not have the case tried summarily, but that he would send it to the High Court of Justiciary. Surely that was an unwarrantable interference with the course of justice. We know that if a Highland case is sent for trial at Edinburgh, the accused person is deprived of his proper means of defence and is most likely to be convicted, for he cannot afford to bring his witnesses all that distance. I think that Sheriff Ivory showed he was persecuting this man when he thus interfered in the province of the Lord Advocate, and suggested that the case should go for trial to the High Court. Still that is not all the illegality I complain of. The Sheriff in his judicial capacity sees the precognition of certain witnesses, and now the Crown refuse to allow him leave to plead these precognitions in his defence of the action brought against him. But what does he do? He publishes details of these private documents and he accuses the man of deliberate perjury. But there is still worse behind. When the case came before the Sheriff Substitute, and the man had a verdict of not guilty returned in his favour, Sheriff Ivory wrote to the Judge and asked him how in the world he came to let the man off? Was there ever a grosser or more lawless proceeding? What was the answer of the Sheriff Substitute? It was that the Crown witnesses' evidence did not come up to the precognitions. Yet this is not all. Certain charges were made against Sheriff Ivory in the newspapers. Now, if a Judge is slandered in a public newspaper there is a constitutional way open to him to defend himself, but Sheriff Ivory, instead of adopting that course, rushed into print, and published the contents of private documents. Certainly, he claimed that he had the authority of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannanshire, in so doing, but the right hon. Gentleman has stated that he gave no such authority whatever, and if we refer to the Minute of the Lords of the Treasury on the subject it will be found that the Sheriff had no ground whatever for his belief. Mr. Balfour certainly wrote that he was confident that Sheriff Ivory acted in a *bonâ fide*, though mistaken, belief that his Lordship had approved the publication; and the Lords of the Treasury express an opinion that the publication of the documents without the express official sanction of the Lord Advocate was an act of imprudence on the part of the Sheriff. But even assuming, for the moment, that the Lord Advocate had sanctioned the publication, this House has a perfect right to object if any official of the Government sanctions a lawless course. Now, let me point out that Sheriff Ivory published these documents while legal proceedings were pending against the man. He was an accused party, yet the Sheriff published a Report denouncing him as the leading ringleader of a mob, and he thereby did that which was calculated to prejudice this man in his trial, which was about to take place before a Criminal Court. The result of the trial was a verdict of not guilty; it was proved that Norman Stewart, instead of doing an illegal act, did his best to turn the mob back, and prevent them molesting the officers of the law. I am surprised that any hon. Member on the Government Benches should stand up for one moment and defend the conduct of Sheriff Ivory in trying, first, to influence the Lord Advocate to change the venue of the trial to Edinburgh, in making public charges against the man before the trial was held, in making use of precognitions to formulate a charge of perjury against another person, although the documents were private ones, and were only in his possession in his official capacity, in denouncing the accused before his trial as the leading ringleader of a mob, and finally, in calling on the Sheriff Substitute to give any explanation for his acquittal of the man. It is quite true that the Government in a matter of this kind will be able to outvote Scotch opinion. There is no doubt that numbers of Members who never even take the trouble to sit and listen to Scotch debates will be found to come when the division bell rings in and outvote the Scotch Members; but can the Government wonder that there should be a feeling arising in Scotland in favour of Home Rule when Scotch business is treated in this way? It is easy to vote down the Scotch Members, but it will not be found so easy to beat down the voice of the constituencies in Scotland, and I warn the Government that they need not be surprised to find Scottish opinion going against them. You wonder why it is that Scotch opinion is Liberal instead of Conservative; the explanation is that, whenever Scotch Questions arise in this House, Scotch Members are promptly outvoted by English Representatives.

MR. W. A. HUNTER (Aberdeen): I think that the whole of this discussion has shown the great inconvenience which arises in Scotland from the combination in the same individual of the functions of a police officer with those of a judge. That I consider to be the mischief of the whole matter. In this particular case the Chief Constable of Inverness was perfectly willing to do the police work, but so enamoured was Sheriff Ivory of his executive functions that he preferred to carry it out himself. I trust the Government will give their attention to this matter, and endeavour to make some arrangement by which, while the executive functions of the Sheriff may be retained to some extent, the police work shall be performed by the Chief Constable. Now, Sir, there have been two cases brought before the House. In that of Beaton I fully admit that the Government have made out a *primâ facie* case, though I think it has been rebutted and destroyed; but, with regard to the case of Norman Stewart, no possible justification has been found for the action of a person who happens to be a judicial officer having of his own motion gratuitously published a libel in an ordinary newspaper upon a private individual. I think he ought to be made to pay the costs which he incurred in his own defence in this matter. Now, what are the facts of Beaton's case? I remember them very well. Some few years ago the disturbances out of which this case arose took place in the form of what is called deforcement of the Sheriff; in other words, 30 or 40 stalwart Highlanders stood in the road and invited the Sheriff to return home without serving his writs. That was no doubt an illegal act, and shortly afterwards a number of warrants were issued for the arrest of parties who were supposed to be implicated in the deforcement of the Sheriff. But considerable difficulty was experienced in serving those warrants and affecting arrests, and finally, Sheriff Ivory had to get up a man-hunting expedition. He took a large police force with him, he concocted a plan of campaign of his own, he had scouts in various parts of the district, he surrounded the village about which his attack was to be directed, he searched above and below the beds with warrant and without warrant, and he did not find the persons whom he was seeking. The expedition proved a failure. We know that, in whatever form of sport mankind indulges, the sportsman never likes to go home with an empty bag. Neither did Sheriff Ivory. So, as he was going home, he happened to spy a shepherd on the hills. He ordered a constable to fetch the man, and when the poor fellow was brought to him he was found to be half-witted. He had not been named by any person as having taken part in the deforcement of the Sheriff; nevertheless Sheriff Ivory, rather than go home with an empty bag, arrested this man on his own responsibility, conveyed him into Portree, and, after keeping him in custody a day or two, was obliged to dismiss him. Now this was the most absolutely gratuitous and unfounded arrest which it was possible for any man to make. I will tell the Government frankly why it is that the conduct of Sheriff Ivory excites such bitter indignation amongst the Scotch Members; it is that the Sheriff would not have dared to arrest Beaton if he had been a rich man; but because he was a poor man with no friends Sheriff Ivory arrested him, as his expedition had failed. It so happens, Sir, that a public subscription was got up in this case, to enable Beaton to bring an action against the Sheriff for wrongful imprisonment. I have no hesitation in saying that if that action had been tried in England exemplary damages would have been awarded. But, so far as I can gather from the judgment of the Court of Session, the law of Scotland differs from that of England, for the Court of Session held that the Sheriff, acting as a police officer, had the same privileges as if he was acting as Sheriff. If that be the law of Scotland, and for my purpose I must assume it is so, the conduct of the Government comes to be a very serious matter, because, although Beaton could not get a remedy in the Court of Session, the very least the Government might have done when a wanton abuse of power of this character had been perpetrated, or at all events when an absolutely groundless arrest had been made, would have been to leave Sheriff Ivory to suffer the natural and probable consequences of his action, namely, to pay the costs of the action which he was not able to recover. It comes to this, that it does not matter how unfounded, how irrational, how unreasonable, how improbable are the grounds upon which a police officer in Scotland acts, if he is sued the Government will pay his expenses. And now, the second case, that of Norman Stewart, is of an entirely different character. When the Lord Advocate (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson) spoke the other night, he said that the Government were bound to defend officials in the due performance of their duties. If this had been an act performed by Sheriff Ivory in the due performance of his duty, no one would have raised any question either as to the amount allowed Sheriff Ivory or as to the principle involved. What are the facts of the case? Sheriff Ivory prepared a report for the then Lord Advocate in regard to the then state of the country. In that report he made a statement with reference to Norman Stewart. It is impossible for anyone to read that report without perceiving that the remark which Sheriff Ivory thought fit to make about Norman Stewart was not only unfounded, but wholly irrelevant to the statement made to the Lord Advocate. The defence set up the other night by the present Lord Advocate was most amazing; it was that by gratuitously publishing this document in the *Scotsman* newspaper, Sheriff Ivory exposed himself to an action for libel, although there were two other ways in which he might have published the document. As Sheriff Ivory had been so generous as to expose himself to the full brunt of an action for libel, the Lord Advocate thought it was only proper that the Government should save him from the consequences. It was said that Sheriff Ivory could have published the document through the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary might have published it as a Parliamentary Paper, but Sheriff Ivory could not have done so. Then it was said he might have published the document through the instrumentality of the Commissioners of Supply. He might by adopting the latter means have escaped responsibility, but the newspaper which published the statement would not have escaped responsibility. This libel was not only wanton and gratuitous, but monstrous. It was published by Sheriff Ivory in defiance of the fact that the gentleman accused had been acquitted by the Sheriff Substitute himself. Is it possible to justify the conduct of the Government in paying the costs of Sheriff Ivory in a private libel suit? It is perfectly true that the publication referred to acts which Sheriff Ivory had performed as a public officer, but that is no justification for shielding him in his private libels. There is one point in regard to which I cannot help thinking misconception has prevailed in the minds of the Government officials who are responsible for the expenditure of this money. At the end of 1887 the former Lord Advocate (Mr. Macdonald) wrote a memorandum, and in it he recommended the Government not to pay the money which had been expended in respect to this libel suit. But the ground upon which the former Lord Advocate justified that view was an erroneous ground. The ground the right hon. and learned Gentleman took was that Sheriff Ivory had published this official document without the approval of his official superior. That may or may not have been the case, but it had nothing to do with Sheriff Ivory, in his private capacity, publishing a libel. When Sheriff Ivory published an official document in the *Scotsman* he committed an offence. In the first place, he committed an offence against Stewart, because he libelled him; and, in the second place, he committed an offence against discipline. I will not go at length into the question of the recollection of Sheriff Ivory with regard to this matter, but it is a very remarkable fact that Sheriff Ivory comes as near giving the Lord Advocate the lie direct as it is possible. He says, in his report, that immediately the publication took place the then Lord Advocate, the present Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour), distinctly informed the House that the publication had taken place without his knowledge. Sheriff Ivory challenged the statement, but not until two years had elapsed. If the Bill which has been proposed by the Attorney General (Sir R. Webster) had been at the time law, it is just possible that Sheriff Ivory might have been committed for misdemeanour; but whether he acted without the authority of the Lord Advocate or not is wholly immaterial. No authority from the Lord Advocate could justify Sheriff Ivory in publishing a libel about a private individual, and that was the offence of which he was found guilty. The case, therefore, is one of the simplest and strongest character. Here is a man who published to the world an official document of a confidential character, without the authority of his official superior. In that document he made statements wholly unnecessary for the purposes for which the document was written, statements affecting the personal character of a private individual. Besides which, the statements were wholly false, and the Government steps in and pays the man's expenses because he happens to be a Judge. It is monstrous that Sheriff Ivory should be allowed to act as a chartered libertine, so to speak; and under the circumstances, I trust the hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division will go to a division.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Member for the St. Rollox Division (Mr. Caldwell) complained of the absence of a great many English Members while he was speaking. I think he might also have complained of the absence of Scotch Members who usually sit on the front Opposition Bench. I missed the ex-Lord Advocate (Mr. J. B. Balfour), under whose auspices Sheriff Ivory was employed, and who had got a good deal to say upon this question. Now, the hon. Member for North Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter), will not expect me to follow him into the very intricate questions of Scotch law which he has raised. I will not do so, neither will I follow him into the question whether an English jury would have acquitted Beaton had they had to deal with his case. [MR. HUNTER: Would have given him damages for wrongful imprisonment.] As the hon. Member spoke of the views of Scotch Judges on this question, I should like to put the view of Scotch Judges in regard to Sheriff Ivory's conduct before the Committee. It is not only Members of successive Governments who have dealt with this question, but a Scotch tribunal not only dismissed the case against Sheriff Ivory on behalf of Beaton, but uttered some very strong and significant words on the subject. These discussions on Sheriff Ivory date back a very long time. The case has been brought up over and over again, and it is very remarkable, that while both in the Press and in the House, the most violent charges are continually being made against Sheriff Ivory, affecting not only his judicial but his moral character, the moment Sheriff Ivory calls someone a ringleader in a riot hon Members opposite rise up and assert that he has committed the greatest sin and the greatest imprudence. [HON. MEMBERS: "He paid damages."] These actions against Sheriff Ivory are part of a Plan of Campaign announced in advance. Let me remind hon. Members that it is not during the lifetime of the present Government that these transactions in regard to which this action was brought occurred. They took place under the benignant rule of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) and his friends, and if Sheriff Ivory is accused of brutalities and indecencies—I think these were the words used by the hon. Member for the College Division——

DR. CAMERON: The indecencies and brutalities I referred to were committed in connection with the expedition conducted by Sheriff Ivory under the present Government.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The persecution of Sheriff Ivory began before the advent of the present Government. It was determined to ruin him, and the hon. Member for the College Division, speaking of the course which had been adopted, said:—

> "Now all this was grossly illegal . . . Assaults and entering houses without warrants were criminal offences, but, if they were only criminal offences, they should obtain as little redress as they did, in the telegram business; but the harrying of dying men, the frightening of ailing women into swoons, and the striking of boys with sticks were happily offences for which the civil as well as the criminal law afforded redress."

Those words Sheriff Ivory might perhaps consider malicious. The moment Sheriff Ivory took any action which exposed him in the slightest degree to attack, the hon. Member announced that he was prepared to subscribe in order to punish him. The action of Norman Stewart was simply part of a general campaign against Sheriff Ivory. Sheriff Ivory had described Norman Stewart as a ring-leader—as taking part in a lawless proceeding. Norman Stewart was acquitted of the charge made against him. Two years afterwards Norman Stewart brought an action and laid his damages at £1,000, but Sheriff Ivory paid £25 into Court, and the action was allowed to drop. The £1,000 was a bogus claim, £25 being considered sufficient compensation for the wrong Norman Stewart had suffered. Now, concerning the case of Beaton, this is what the hon. Member (Dr. Cameron) said—

> "He (Beaton) went to a lawyer, and wanted to raise an action for wrongous imprisonment, but was told he had better not. By all means let him raise an action, and by all means let him carry it from Court to Court; aye, up to the House of Lords. For such work cash was needed. But such a method was the only way in which they could vindicate directly the course of law and order in the Highlands; and so important did he consider the adoption of such a course in the interests of the Highlanders at the present moment, that he would rather give £100 towards a fighting fund than subscribe £5 to the support of the prisoners or their dependents."

DR. CAMERON: For the purpose of vindicating civil rights.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I have no doubt the funds so generously subscribed were used for that purpose. It was thus that this action for libel was brought two years after the publication on which the libel was based; two years the alleged libel had been before the world and no one took the slightest step until the Fighting Fund of the hon. Member was raised. The Lord Ordinary, a man in whom I presume Scotchmen have confidence, said, in regard to Beaton's case—

> "The Sheriff in this case evinced firmness and resolution, and if he had not done so he would not have done his duty. If the Chief Magistrate of a county responsible for its peace were to be liable to an action of damages for what he did in the *bonâ fide* execution of his duty, the result would be that his powers to quash tumult and insurrection would be altogether paralyzed."

Dismissing the case, on appeal, the Lord President said:—

> "There is a very special protection surrounding the defender in the execution of his duty as Sheriff of the County, and responsible for the peace of the County; and that protection, I think, extends to this, that he will not be liable for anything that he does in the performance of that duty, unless it can be shown that he was actuated by a malicious motive of some kind, and the mere use of the word malice in a case of this description, I think, is quite insufficient to fulfil the condition upon which alone such an action can be entertained. The presumption in favour of a public officer, that he is doing no more than his duty, and doing it honestly and

bona fide, is a very strong one, and certainly ought not to be overcome by a simple use of the word 'malice.' It is for the benefit of the public, it is for the interests of justice and good Government, that public officers acting in the execution of their duty should be surrounded by a very considerable protection. The cries brought out in this third article of the Condescendence, I need hardly say, are not such as to warrant any inference of malicious motive, and therefore, in that respect, I conceive the Record to be irrelevent."

Sheriff Ivory was not only acquitted in the case of Beaton, but acquitted with compliments. I now come to the details of the second case, the case of Norman Stewart, which is more especially before the House, because it is in respect of this case that the payment of expenses is to be sanctioned. Sheriff Ivory published a Report which he had made, and the only point in the Report to which exception was taken before the Court was that he had called Norman Stewart a ringleader in a riot. Stewart suffered no damage thereby; indeed, the only motive there could be in bringing the action for libel was to carry out the intention announced when the fighting fund of the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow was formed. It was a bogus action for libel, and the Sheriff only failed to make a good defence owing to a technical point. He was unable to bring forward his proofs, as has been shown by the hon. Gentleman opposite. The Sheriff paid £25 into Court in satisfaction of damages of £1,000 which had been claimed, and the action was allowed to drop. It must be patent to everyone that there was no question whatever of real injury done by the alleged libel; but that it was a question how far Sheriff Ivory should be mulcted and punished, on the ground of a technical offence, for subsequent conduct which was displeasing to a certain Party in this House. The whole object now is to obtain the assent and sanction of the House to the views of hon. Members opposite as against Sheriff Ivory. It is the conduct of Sheriff Ivory that is really at stake. A question has been raised as to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour). It was asked in the first part of the discussion what he had really said as to the payment of these expenses. Well, this is what he said—

"I consider that the conduct of Sheriff Ivory throughout the Crofter troubles was such as to entitle him to the favourable consideration of the Treasury in the matter of costs incurred in Stewart's case."

I call the attention of the hon. Gentleman opposite to these words by his own Lord Advocate.

Dr. CAMERON: As a point of order, Mr. Courtney, I asked the Secretary to the Treasury the other day to produce that letter, and he would not. As the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has quoted the letter, should he not——

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Lay it on the Table—certainly.

Dr. CAMERON: Or rather, read the whole of it.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Certainly. My hon. Friend the other night had not got the letter—which was marked "private and confidential"—with him. We now have the authority of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan to make the letter public, as it shows how the misunderstanding may have arisen between himself and Sheriff Ivory.

Dr. CAMERON: What is the date of the letter?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: March the 20th, 1888. It says—

"(1) I have no doubt whatever that Sheriff Ivory sent the report to the newspapers for publication is *bonâ fide*, and that he is speaking truly when he says that he believed he had my authority for doing so, although he is mistaken in this."

This is testimony that, at least, Sheriff Ivory was acting *bonâ fide*, and I accept the evidence of the right hon. Gentleman to that effect, as against the malicious suggestions which have been made that he was not so acting. Sheriff Ivory's action may be called imprudent, but, at any rate, it cannot be suggested that the Sheriff did not act honestly. The letter goes on to say—

"The only conversation which I could in 1885 or can now recollect having had with him, in which reference was made to the publication of official Reports, related to his transmitting copies of such Reports to the Police Committee of the Commissioners of Supply of the County of Inverness. He had been feeling acutely certain unfounded charges which had been made against him."

and I may here assure the House that it is not only hon. Gentlemen opposite who feel the charges brought against them. It is often forgotten that officials of the Government can feel as keenly as other people, and that some little share of sympathy is due to them in their difficulties even when brought on by imprudence. It is not pleasant to be vehemently and incessantly accused, as Sheriff Ivory has been, without any opportunity of reply, and it is not surprising that, when such is the case, an official should be betrayed into somewhat hasty action. The letter continues—

> "In certain newspapers, and he was desirous that these should be contradicted by the official Report from Skye being made public. I deprecated such publication, and he said something as to the Police Committee (and the Commissioners of Supply) being entitled to see the Report relative to the action of their own police, and I assented to this view that they were so entitled. In the course of the conversation I remember that he spoke of Reports which so numerous a body as the Commissioners of Supply were entitled to see becoming virtually public, and the only surmise I can make is that he had interpreted an assent to the view that the Police Committee were entitled to have the Reports relative to their police, even though this might lead to their becoming public through the Commissioners of Supply, as an assent to the direct publication of the Report in the newspapers."

That is precisely the version of the matter given by my right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate the other day, showing how the misunderstanding arose. I now come to the second part of the letter—

> "(2) I consider that the conduct of Sheriff Ivory throughout the Crofter troubles was such as to entitle him to the favourable consideration of the Treasury in the matter of the costs incurred in Stewart's case. The duties which he had to discharge were of the most difficult, delicate, and anxious character; and I may refer to the opinion expressed by Mr. Arthur Balfour on the 16th of February, 1887 (when Secretary for Scotland), as to the manner in which he (Sheriff Ivory) had discharged these duties ("Hansard," vol. 310, page 1,696), and to my concurrence in what Mr. Arthur Balfour said (page 1,705).
>
> "Hoping that the Treasury may decide to relieve Sheriff Ivory of the costs in question,
>
> "I remain, my dear Sir, yours very truly,
>
> "J. B. BALFOUR."

Therefore it seems that the late Lord Advocate, under whom Sheriff Ivory served, knowing the whole affair and having had all the circumstances brought before him, thought it right to recommend his case to the favourable consideration of the Treasury. I do not wish for one moment to put the case before the House solely on the recommendation of the late Lord Advocate; but I think hon. Gentlemen opposite will be glad to know that, at all events, in the course we are taking we have the concurrence of the Lord Advocate under whom Sheriff Ivory served. There has seldom been a more violent attack made upon any public officer than has been made upon Sheriff Ivory. The way in which his conduct has been viewed, not by his present judicial superiors only, but by the late Government, is patent from what I have read to the House, and the Committee will agree with me, I think, that we owe something to public officers who discharge difficult and delicate duties. These gentlemen should receive the support of their official superiors; and, under these circumstances, we do not think that the Plan of Campaign of the Member for the College Division of Glasgow will succeed, the object of which is to punish Sheriff Ivory pecuniarily for the way in which he has discharged his public duties.

*SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down seems to me, to a certain extent, to have forgotten the character in which he appears here during the discussion of the Estimates. He appears here as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he maintains the position with great ability; and we are here in the character of private Members and custodians of the public money. We attend to the Estimates for the purpose of discussing them without passion. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of this being a question of passion from first to last; he has spoken of the violence of the strife that has raged round Sheriff Ivory, but it seems to me that he himself has contributed to that strife in no small degree. He speaks of motives having all along been imputed to Sheriff Ivory. Well, I certainly am not going to impute any motives to Sheriff Ivory, but I must observe that the right hon. Gentleman himself imputed motives very freely across the House.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I read the extract.

*SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN: Yes; the right hon. Gentleman read it out, but he afterwards repeated it in his own words when he said that the object of the present action was to punish Sheriff for his conduct in the Highlands. I, however, say that the motive of our action to-night is to protest against that which we believe to be a proposed misapplication of public money. I pass over, without remark, the case of John Beaton. I do not think it necessary to enter into the case, as I believe this vote may be taken solely and simply on the case of Norman Stewart. Now, what is the case against Sheriff Ivory as against Norman Stewart? It is that he published an official Report which he was not justified in publishing—a Report which contained a very serious statement which, before an important Court, was proved in evidence to be an incorrect statement. That is the simple case. The right hon. Gentleman opposite has used a great many words, but he has refrained from reading any of the vital points from the Memorandum before the House, and certainly he has refrained from reading the passage which appears to me absolutely to settle this question in the course of twelve lines. The Dean of Faculty, speaking on behalf of Sheriff Ivory, said the statement made by his client in a Report to the Lord Advocate was that Norman Stewart was the ringleader of a certain mob. Nothing can be more simple than that. The statement, he said, was made by the Sheriff on information contained in an official document transmitted to him by the Crown authorities, and Sheriff Ivory had no reason to doubt the correctness of the document, and accordingly repeated the statement which it contained; but he subsequently found that the facts did not justify the statement, and, consequently, he made a tender which was now before their Lordships. "I understand," said the Dean of Faculty, "that the tender has been accepted, and your Lordships are now at liberty to grant a decree on the terms of the tender or to dismiss the action as the other side may ask." Now, what had occurred to bring this about? Why, it had been shown before the Sheriff's Substitute that Sheriff Ivory's description of Norman Stewart in his Report to the Lord Advocate was entirely erroneous. It was proved to the satisfaction of the Judge that Norman Stewart had not taken that course which Sheriff Ivory had attributed to him. That was the first branch of the grievance under which Mr. Norman Stewart was suffering, and it was the first branch of the malfeasance of Sheriff Ivory. That, I conclude, is undenied. The other point is whether Sheriff Ivory was justified in publishing an official paper. I listened very carefully to the letter of the late Lord Advocate the Member for Clackmannan, and I do not gather that he goes back from his original opinion that he gave no authority whatever to Sheriff Ivory for the publication of the Report. But he does make a sort of half-expressed plea for mercy for Sheriff Ivory; and I am bound to say—speaking as a Member of Parliament responsible for the disposal of the public money—that there is no ground for that appeal whatever, and we have no right to listen to it. This case was decided previously, not on *ad misericordiam* grounds, but on official grounds, in accordance with the precedents of the Treasury. It was decided, after consulting the late Lord Advocate, Mr. Macdonald, and the opinion expressed by that Lord Advocate—who was exactly as much the Lord Advocate of the present Government as the Member for Clackmannan was the Lord Advocate of the late Government—was that he was able to recommend that the costs of the action of Beaton should be refunded to Sheriff Ivory in full, but that the case of Stewart presented much greater difficulty. He said that under the circumstances he could not recommend that these costs should be paid, and the Treasury decided not to pay. After that, by the great powers of importunity which Sheriff Ivory possessed, an appeal was again made to the Treasury. Sheriff Ivory thought he had at last got a high official who was sure to take his view of the facts. He appealed from the officials of the Treasury and from Lord Advocate Macdonald to the present Chief Secretary for Ireland, who, he declared, looked at things not in detail, who looked not to the points of the case, but who looked broadly to see whether a public official was acting on one side or the other, and who "was intimately acquainted with the work I had to do in Skye." Hon. Members know what the views of the Chief Secretary for Ireland are with regard to the agrarian difficulties in the Highlands, and also that when the Crofters' Bill was before the House of Commons the Chief Secretary for Ireland opposed it on the ground that, though there might be grievances about rent in Ireland, there were in Scotland no landlords who over-rented their tenants. That was the opinion of the Chief Secretary for Ireland then, and it may be now; but the opinion of the Land Commission, which has gone deeper into the matter than the Chief Secretary for Ireland, has come to a different conclusion, for while the reductions on rents have been largely in excess of Irish reductions, the reductions in arrears has been frequently double the reductions in rents. It was while the right hon. Gentleman was Secretary for Scotland that Sheriff Ivory appealed to him against the judgment of Lord Advocate Macdonald, and, above all, against the judgment of the Court of Justice in Scotland.

MR. GOSCHEN: When my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland was Secretary for Scotland I do not believe this concession had been made. The whole point raised by the right hon. Gentleman is absolutely chimerical to the last degree.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I have made no statement except that Sheriff Ivory appealed to the present Chief Secretary for Ireland. What I look to is the conduct of Sheriff Ivory when he finds himself face to face with Members of Parliament trying to do their duty as Members of Parliament. I will read some passages from Sheriff Ivory's most recent Memorandum—

"The enemies of law and order will, no doubt, rejoice that the Government should have changed their views and censured me as they have done. But I venture to predict that the law-abiding public will be of a different opinion when they learn the true state of the facts. If executive officers, after doing their best to discharge their duties honestly and fearlessly, are to be treated in this manner, no Government can expect them to act in the future with the necessary promptitude and decision. . . . . I think I have some reason to complain that my claim for repayment of the expenses of a lawsuit prompted by political animosity should in the circumstances have been referred for decision to the Law Officer of the Crown as if it depended on a technical question of law—to one, too, whose conduct in regard to this very case had been so much complained of by me in my printed Memorandum. Had it been referred to Mr. A. J. Balfour, who was intimately acquainted with the work I had to do in Skye, who knew the danger of allowing false and unfounded statements regarding the conduct of a Government expedition to remain unanswered, and who would have dealt with the matter in a broad and statesmanlike manner, I should have been perfectly satisfied."

The question is whether an individual did act in an unbecoming and riotous manner towards the expedition to which Sheriff Ivory referred. Sheriff Ivory says he did; but he was proved not to have acted in that manner, and Sheriff Ivory was himself obliged to acknowledge that it was so, and then he appealed to the Chief Secretary for Ireland against "false and unfounded statements." I have thrown no passion into this question, and have attributed no motive to Sheriff Ivory. I blame him for one thing only, and that is for the indecorous statements in the last Memorandum he has sent, a Memorandum upon which, I am sorry to say, the Government has made a concession which it ought never to have made, and has reversed its previous opinion—an opinion founded upon reasons which I believe it is absolutely impossible to answer except by high-sounding generalities.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is satisfied that to night, at all events, he has had a patient hearing from the Scotch Members. I venture to think that the complaint with which he began his speech on this subject was somewhat disingenuous. We all know that he is a master of debate, and no one admires his debating powers more than I do; but his chief weapon is his remarkable power of repartee, and it seems to me that he rather courts interruption than otherwise. At all events, the Scotch Members to-night, after his complaint on that score, abstained from interfering with him, and I think the result was that he sat down somewhat crestfallen, because he had lost his usual opportunity. The right hon. Gentleman, it seems to me, has confused the issues on this question, or has tried to do so. The case is a very simple one, but the right hon. Gentleman has repeated in the House the misrepresentation that is being made outside—I mean the misrepresentation that this controversy is a mere incident in a personal feud between Sheriff Ivory and the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow. I wish to say for myself that I, for one, know nothing whatever of that feud. I know next to nothing of Sheriff Ivory himself, and my judgment on the matter is based entirely on the materials laid before the House. I decline to go into the suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this is all the result of a "Plan of Campaign"—of a conspiracy to promote bogus actions, and to punish, by vindictive damages, an official who had deserved well of his country. I think we must go back to simple facts, and, if I may be allowed to say so, to the only defence that has yet been made—namely, that submitted the other night by the Lord Advocate. I assume that we are dealing entirely with the case of Norman Stewart. The fact is that Sheriff Ivory libelled one of Her Majesty's subjects, and that he was sued in an ordinary action for libel on that account. He made no defence—he pleaded guilty; he was cast in damages, and now the Government ask us to pay his bill of costs. Only two reasons have been assigned, that I can see, why we should pay the bill of costs of Sheriff Ivory. One is that the delinquent is a Judge, and that it was his business to enforce the law. Well, we have all known cases in which ignorance of the law has been set up as a good moral, if not a good legal, excuse; but I have never before known of a case in which knowledge of the law was put forth in defence of a delinquent in such a position. Another reason was assigned, that these might have been Parliamentary Papers, and, if they had been, the Sheriff would have run no risk of prosecution. But the privilege, in such a case, would have been the privilege of Parliament, not of Sheriff Ivory—not of the person making these slanderous communications. The privilege of Parliament is based on great Constitutional reasons; but they have no application to a case in which a judicial officer goes beyond his duties and breaks the law he is bound to administer, and libels a subject of the Crown. I can see nothing in these reasons to justify the position the Government have taken up. Let me mention, also, this is not an ordinary case of litigation. There is a curious relationship between the parties in this little drama. The solicitor who ran up this bill of costs to an amount that seems to be beyond all precedent was not an ordinary solicitor, but the son of Sheriff Ivory, and one may admire the filial piety of this pious Eneas in running up a bill to an amount no ordinary Attorney would have reached, because in his view the Government were bound to pay it. I think the whole circumstances of the case show that instead of it being a bogus action, Sheriff Ivory had to defend it as a bogus claim made upon Her Majesty's Government. The claim was condemned by the Law Officers as one that ought not to have been submitted, and, if I am within the limits of Parliamentary propriety in using the term, it is a piece of colossal impudence on the part of Her Majesty's Government in submitting this demand to the House.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Derby): I must say a few words on this case, because the publication of these documents took place, as I am reminded on looking at the dates, when I was the official superior of Sheriff Ivory. I do not wish to say much about that Gentleman. The Sheriff used to address a great many letters to me very much in the tone of that published on page 15 of the correspondence; and if Sheriff Ivory treated his inferiors as he did his superiors I was very sorry for them. The claim made by him in the case before us has been refused by the late Lord Advocate and the Treasury authorities, who said that the Bill ought not to be paid. What did Sheriff Ivory do thereupon? He set to work and abused the Government of the day, telling them that they did not deserve to have such an admirable Sheriff, and that if they did not support him all sorts of terrible things would happen to them, and the enemies of law and order would triumph. The Sheriff said, "I do not care for the Lord Advocate or the Treasury. Give me A. J. Balfour." The idea of Sheriff Ivory was that if he only raised the cry of "the enemies of law and order" he would see the Chancellor of the Exchequer overruling the Lord Advocate and the Treasury, and paying his bill. Accordingly we have the Chancellor of the Exchequer imploring, and even threatening the Committee, and bullying the Scotch Members in this matter, in order that he may waste £200 of the public money which the Treasury has refused to pay. That is the political situation of the Government. If you only whisper into the ear of the Chancellor of the Exchequer "the enemies of law and order" he will come down and spend £200, or £200,000, or even £200,000,000, and defend it in the passionate way he has done this evening. It is a very bad thing to allow the Government to be bullied in the way they have been by Sheriff Ivory. I do not know what I should have done if I had had "Mr. A. J. Balfour" for a colleague. Perhaps I should have been like the present Home Secretary, whose subordinate sent letters to "Mr. A. J. Balfour" for publication in the *Times*. That was the way the Home Office is carried on. The Home Secretary is a cipher in his own office. Sheriff Ivory did not look to the Lord Advocate nor to the Treasury, but to "Mr. A. J. Balfour," and then the Chancellor of the Exchequer implores the House of Commons to waste the money of the country in the way now proposed. I cannot vote for the payment of this money. Sheriff Ivory incurred the penalty by doing a grossly improper official act, for which he deserved to be rebuked and punished; and at the present time these acts on the part of subordinate officials are encouraged so long as they raise the cry of "the enemies of law and order." What is being done now all round the Civil Service? Look at the state of things at the Home Office! The Home Secretary is not recognised; he is a cipher. We find Mr. Anderson handing over confidential Home Office documents without the leave of the Home Secretary, and then "Mr. A. J. Balfour" insists upon the right hon. Gentleman coming down and saying that that was quite a proper proceeding. How do the Government expect their subordinates to behave if they encourage them to become violent political partizans and to utter libels, and then pay the damages? A more thorough picture of the demoralization of public servants than that which had been shown up within the last few weeks I have never seen. We see prison doctors sending proof-sheets of letters to the Secretary for Ireland for publication in the *Times* newspaper, the Secretary for Ireland acting as a sort of sub-editor. We see Sheriff Ivory publishing confidential documents of this kind, and at the very time when the trial was pending of the man against whom he made these false statements. The Report was published, I am told, in the month of February, and the man was tried in March. He was acquitted, and naturally he complained, and there need be no surprise that he brought the action. The late Lord Advocate, and with him the Treasury, express the opinions that the money ought not to be paid, but after Sheriff Ivory has sufficiently rated the right hon. Gentleman, and held "Mr. A. J. Balfour" *in terrorem* over them they yield and agree to this waste of public money. I suppose we may assume that at the close of the financial year the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be bursting with a surplus, and he wants to expend a portion of it upon Sheriff Ivory. If the right hon. Gentleman has a surplus I congratulate him, but I advise him not to spend the public money in the way proposed. I think this was a most improper proceeding on the part of Sheriff Ivory. I think the action brought against him resulted in a just verdict, that to publish the Report as he did was a breach of discipline, and that the publication at the time when the man was about to be tried was much worse than an official indiscretion, and I think the payment of these damages will be an extremely good lesson to Sheriff Ivory and other officials who are disposed to take the law into their own hands and do as they think fit without regard to their official superiors.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I had hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have thanked us for the "Plan of Campaign" we have adopted towards Sheriff Ivory, instead of reproaching us. I should like him to say what other course we should have taken. Would you have us shooting behind a hedge? We found, or thought we found, a Sheriff acting illegally, and we ventured to try the case in a court of law. This is a course which I should have thought would have had the approval of the Party of law and order. I think the Lord Advocate should withdraw his incorrect statement regarding his predecessor, Mr. J. B. Balfour. He told us that the late Lord Advocate wanted these letters of Sheriff Ivory published. His words were, "They both wanted them published." Now, it appears from the letter read by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the late Lord Advocate did not want them published; he deprecated the publication.

MR. JACKSON: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan did not deprecate the publication of the letters. What he deprecated was the publication of the attacks upon Sheriff Ivory.

DR. CLARK: The Lord Advocate said that both wanted the letters published.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I said that the right hon. Member for Clackmannan and Sheriff Ivory were at one in desiring that a refutation should be given to the calumnious charges which had been made against Sheriff Ivory.

DR. CLARK: I understood him they both wanted the letters published. As a matter of fact, he did not want the publication, and this is one of the many misrepresentations that have been weaved about the facts. We are told that the Government must protect public servants even when they err; but if we are going to have men riding rough-shod over our people, coming at midnight into homes without warrant, whether women or invalids are there or not, taking prisoners without warrant, if they have been doing such things and we bring them into Court to answer and they are mulct in damages, are we then to vote the money here? If that is to be so we must have recourse to another Plan of Campaign. If your Law and Order procedure is thus of no avail, if the Law is to punish, have the Parliament to find the money we must have recourse to the prisons. Sheriff Ivory published this lie for the purpose of biassing the Court and getting a man punished, and what was the evidence of the Sheriff's officer who was deforced? He was mobbed, he said, and the man who came forward and tried to protect him from violence was this man, Norman Stewart. The officer swore that Stewart interfered and he got away unhurt. Here was a good citizen who came to the protection of an officer of the law, perhaps, getting himself into trouble, making himself unpopular in the neighbourhood, and he is made the subject of Sheriff Ivory's attack, and yet we are to pay Sheriff Ivory's costs! Let me suggest to the Attorney General that he should look upon this case of Sheriff Ivory as that of a brother in affliction; let him with his colleagues pay these expenses from their own pockets. The First Lord, who has made considerable profit from the sale of a libellous pamphlet, might join with the Attorney General in subscribing from these ill-gotten gains and the assistance of Sheriff Ivory. The case of the *Times* is exactly on a par with this of Sheriff Ivory. Suppose the *Times*, defeated in an action for libel by those which had maligned and slandered, were to come and ask for Parliamentary assistance. You may whitewash Sheriff Ivory, you may condone his illegal action, and if you do it will not be the first time the cause of law and order has been directed with favours of illegality.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I do not take the extreme view put forward by some of my friends. I quite admit the duty of supporting public officers in the *bonâ fide* discharge of their duties, even when they may err, unless, indeed, you pay them in such a way as to guarantee them against the consequences of a mistake. I differ then from the view put forward by the hon. Member for Aberdeen, and had it been necessary I should in the Beaton case have supported the Government, because I believe the Sheriff, occupying his responsible position, did what he did in the performance of a public duty in what he considered to be the public interest. But when we come to the other case—that of Stewart—then I look at it from an entirely different point of view. Here Sheriff Ivory was mulct in damages because he published a libel against Stewart. Apart from the question whether he was right or wrong, I am willing to believe that the Sheriff acted *bonâ fide*, from passion and prejudice perhaps, but not from malice. But he did not publish this report as part of his official duty, he published it in a newspaper, which was a grave official fault. It is hardly worth while considering that if he had made the Report to his official superior the paper would have become public property and the Sheriff would have been protected; it is not pretended that in publishing it in a newspaper Sheriff Ivory acted for the public interest; no public interest was involved; he acted simply because he was irritated and aggrieved by assaults upon his personal character. There is excuse for Sheriff Ivory. I admit he was greatly irritated; and if it were a question of punishing him or dismissing him for a grave error of judgment we might accept the excuse. but this is not a question of punishing him, the proposal is to punish the taxpayers by levying the damages the Sheriff is called upon to pay, and I must say I do not think we are justified in doing that. So I must vote in the Lobby with my hon. Friends.

*Mr. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.): I have no feeling against Sheriff Ivory, and do not know much about him; he has done me no harm and I wish to do him no harm, the object of my displeasure is Her Majesty's Government, and what I complain of is their alternative negative and affirmative action. I am at a loss to understand how they succeeded in refuting their own arguments against this claim. The old adage that second thoughts are best has been falsified in this case; the first thoughts of the Government were good, their subsequent thoughts worse and worse. I am surprised at the clumsy and discreditable manner in which they have "turned their backs upon themselves," certainly, if I had to perform the feat I would try to do it in a more graceful way. What did Sheriff Ivory do? An attempt has been made to make light of the libel; but it was in fact a libel published upon a man about to be tried by himself or his representative. He declared this man to be a ringleader of a mob, and promoter of lawless proceedings. I should like to ask English Members to put such a case as this before themselves for one moment. This Judge is going to try this prisoner for being a ringleader of a mob, for being a promoter of lawless proceedings, yet two months before the trial comes on he publishes, on his own authority and without any special provocation, a statement of his opinion in a newspaper that the person whom he was going to try was the leading ringleader of a mob and the principal promoter of the lawless proceedings in the district. What would hon. Members for English constituencies feel if any one of their own Judges, with respect to a prisoner whom he was going to try four weeks hence, were to print in the *Times*, or any other journalistic receptacle for mendacious and defamatory garbage, a statement that the man awaiting trial was the principal promoter of burglaries or murderous proceedings in the district? I think that steps would be taken to remove such an unjudicial man from the Bench. What are the defences that have been made for Sheriff Ivory in this matter? It has been said that he had the sanction of a gentleman whom I may be allowed to call Lord Advocate Balfour—by reason of his position in a former Parliament —His authority has been adduced as justifying the action of the Sheriff. But we, who know the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Clackmannanshire, believe it to be perfectly unconceivable and utterly impossible that so eminent a jurist as he is, should have ever given his authority or advice to any person in the position of a judge to libel an untried prisoner. That Sheriff Ivory could imagine that he had any such authority goes far to convince me that he is not a person suitable to continue in the exercise of judicial functions. The person Sheriff Ivory libelled was acquitted; he was proved in Court to be innocent, yet after he had retired from the action, which the accused person naturally brought against him, by paying the costs of the plaintiff, he actually continued to defend the publication of the libel, and maintained that it was true. The accusation was published in Feburary; the man was acquitted in March, in June the libel action was disposed of, and on the 26th August, Sheriff Ivory sent a long and elaborate statement to the Treasury, in which he continued to maintain that the man to whom he had paid damages was still guilty of the thing of which by paying the costs, he had previously tacitly admitted that he was innocent. Now, Sir, with respect to the case of Norman Stewart What does Sheriff Ivory say in respect to him?—

> "That he showed consciousness of his guilt in absconding to the hills on the approach of the police to his dwelling, and in doing his utmost to evade the law."

But how could he show consciousness of guilt when he was proved in a Court of Law to be innocent? What he did do was to show his consciousness of the extreme danger under which he would be if he fell into the hands of Sheriff Ivory. For myself, if I were wanted for judicial purposes by Sheriff Ivory, I would retire not only to the hills, but to the valleys and to all the "rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death" I could think of, before I would entrust my character into the keeping of a magistrate who has shown that he does not possess even the most rudimentary vestige of the elementary principles of justice. Then we have the Lord Advocate coming forward voluntarily in opposition to his predecessor in office, in order to defend Sheriff Ivory. I was sorry to see him take rather a light view of this matter. He speaks lightly of a £200 subject—with his nose in the air—but is that all? He said it was merely a technical error of which Sheriff Ivory had been guilty. He pointed out that the Sheriff could have secured publication of his version of the matter under privilege if he had only waited for the issue of the Report of the Commission of Supply, so that he committed a mere formal offence in publishing it in anticipation of the trial of this unhappy crofter. But is it a right thing—is it merely a technical error to libel an innocent man even under privilege? Is there only a technical distinction to be drawn between a publication by your own act in defiance of your duty, and a publication through the act of others consequent on the compulsory discharge of your duty? I think it is a substantial, and not a technical distinction. Was it a mere technical wrong that was done to this unfortunate crofter? Would it not have been safer for him if Sheriff Ivory had waited until his Report had been issued by the Commissioners of Supply in April? The trial and acquittal took place in March, while Sheriff Ivory published the Report in February, and so this unfortunate man had to fight against tremendous odds, of the public denunciations of the official superior of the Judge who was to try him. This is a strange revelation of judicial life in the North of Scotland. Sheriff Ivory, in the most ingenuous way, shows the ideas of justice which prevail in his mind by writing to his substitute for the reasons for the partial breaking down of the case. The reply was that the Crown witnesses did not come up to the precognitions at either of the crofter trials. That is to say, when these poor people were examined in secret before the Procurator Fiscal they were willing to say a good deal so long as they were not on oath; but when they came to be put upon oath, they shrank from the statements which they had previously been tempted into making by the intolerant swagger and overbearing demeanour with which we are too well acquainted. The Sheriff next brings in a *Deus ex machinâ* in the shape of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who was then Secretary for Scotland. He says—

> "I furnished Mr. A. J. Balfour with notes on a speech of Dr. Cameron containing innumerable charges against me, for the purpose of enabling him to answer those charges in the Crofters' Debate in the House of Commons, which was then about to take place."

Later on, he says—

> "But in consequence of the turn which the debate took, Mr. A. J. Balfour, fortunately for me, considered it necessary to supplement the observations of the Lord Advocate, and was pleased to adopt a very different line of conduct in reference to the charges made against me. Mr. Balfour answered conclusively one by one the numerous charges that had been brought against me"—

having been previously primed by this gentleman himself. Later still this document continues that Mr. A. J. Balfour observed—

> "The truth is, in my judgment, very scant justice has been done to Sheriff Ivory in this matter."

"Our law," he continued—

> "is administered, after all, not by angels, but by men; and if you impose upon men a most difficult, laborious, and delicate task, some slight failure there must necessarily be."

I am not going to enter into a controversy with the Chief Secretary on a question of angels. A philosopher who having first written a successful Pyrrhonistic treatise proving that science is as baseless as theology, has afterwards elicited rapturous applause from bishops, archdeacons, and honourable women in Church Congress assembled, by apologizing for Christianity on the ground that it is the best working creed for this world if one can only believe in it, is not a person with whom ordinary inquirers should risk a controversy. But I had always understood that even angels suffer for their offences for the sake of maintaining law and order in the universe; and from this it would seemingly follow *a fortiori* that men in general, and sheriffs in particular, should suffer for their blunders in the interests of the public good. I therefore think Her Majesty's Government perfectly justified in their first purpose of making Sheriff Ivory suffer a little inconvenience in order that he might be made a sadder, if not wiser, man and Sheriff. Now, I will ask the indulgence of the Committee while I turn to the second position assumed by Her Majesty's Government in March, 1888. What are the reasons that they assign for the remarkable reversal of their position six months before? "Taking note of the opinion of Lord Advocate Balfour," that "the Sheriff had acted on the *bond fide* though mistaken belief" that the Lord Advocate had approved of the publication, they sanctioned the payment of the costs and damages. But that the Sheriff persisted in thinking that he was in the right is just what makes him all the more objectionable. The more a fanatic of injustice believes he is right when he is indefensibly wrong the more unfit he is for his position. If a man's ideas are totally wrong and outrageous, then the greater his *bond fides* the more mischief he is likely to do. Let me point out that Lord Advocate Balfour takes very good care to intimate that he never gave Sheriff Ivory any reason to suppose he had his approbation for the outrageous act of which he had been guilty. But, even if Sheriff Ivory had that authority, still the act was glaringly wrong. Lord Advocates may be very great officers, but they cannot possibly give authority to a sensible man to contradict his own common sense, or rather to do that which he knows—or ought to know—to be utterly unjudicial or anti-judicial. We are told to lay great stress on the fact that Lord Advocate Balfour was pleased to say he considered the general conduct of Sheriff Ivory in his work was such as to entitle him to favourable consideration as regards the costs in question. But the opinion of "Lord Advocate Balfour" was written by him when he had ceased to be Lord Advocate, and when he was simply a private member of the Scotch Bar; and a Government which contains the philosopher who teaches that law is administered not by angels but by men, might have remembered the popular—I do not say the accurate—impression that lawyers, upon questions of costs and fees, are not only not angelic, but barely human, and even accipitral in their nature, and in such a matter not disposed to pick out each other's eyes. A brilliant master of antithesy signalized the difference between Bacon seeking for the truth and Bacon seeking for the Seals, and similarly there is a vast difference between Sheriff Ivory seeking for the crofters and Sheriff Ivory seeking for the costs; in the document seeking for costs there is an evidence of skill and capacity which is sufficient to dumbfound anyone who has read only his first Memorandum. The whole of his trust is wisely reposed upon the name of Mr. A. J. Balfour, who is declared over and over again to be responsible for his actions. From what I know of the feeling which exists in Scotland upon this matter it is regarded as a shameless job. It is thought that it has been wrung out of the good nature of one wearer of the name of Balfour, and by flattering the imperiousness of another wearer of the same name; and that though the man who tries to support himself on two stools is certain to come to grief and to the ground, the man, and especially the Sheriff, who succeeds in supporting himself on two Balfours is equally certain to come to cash and victory.

*MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): I desire, Sir, in speaking on this subject, to call attention to what the Scottish Members on this side of the House feel with regard to it. What we complain of is that Sheriff Ivory in February, 1885, having reported a confidential communication, containing slanderous matter to the Lord Advocate, took upon himself to issue it to the newspapers. When Sheriff Ivory published that letter he started by stating that he had communicated it to the Police Committee at Inverness, and gave that as a reason why it might be published in the newspapers. From my point of view it does not matter whether the Lord Advocate gave his consent to the publication or not, and I would point out that the document was never published by the Police Committee of the Commissioners of Supply, although the Sheriff implies that when communicated to them, it would necessarily have been made public. No authority given by the Lord Advocate or Commissioners of Supply could privilege slander, and the effect of any such authority would thereby be to make them accessories, and liable in the consequences. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was very severe in his remarks to-night on what was said on a former occasion by my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron), whose exertions on behalf of the people of the Highlands and Islands will never be forgotten in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman also said that Sheriff Ivory was not guilty of anything in the nature of malice in regard to the man Norman Stewart. I do not want to impute to Sheriff Ivory more than is necessary under present circumstances; but I will take the case against that official from the documents that are before us, including the Memorials to the Treasury, and I will say that though the statements they contain are, to a large extent, inaccurate, if they do not also convey the idea of bias or malice, then one is at a loss to know what malice is. Let us deal in illustration with one inaccuracy. The Sheriff says, in one Memorandum—

> "These proceedings, and also the conduct of the Government in Skye generally, have frequently been brought under the notice of Parliament, and repeated Motions have been made by Dr. Cameron and others for public inquiry in regard to them, as well as for the stoppage of my salary and my dismissal from office; but these Motions have, after full and ample discussion, invariably been refused by both Conservative and Liberal Governments."

Now, it is not correct to say that any Motion has ever been made in this House for the stoppage of Sheriff Ivory's salary. No such Motion could be made, as the salary does not fall under the Estimates. The hon. Gentleman the Member for St. Rollox (Mr. Caldwell) has commented with just severity on the conduct of Sheriff Ivory after the trial of the men who were charged with a breach of the law, and has pointed out that he, being the Sheriff of the County, communicated with the Sheriff Substitute by whom Norman Stewart was acquitted, and demanded to know how it was that he, the Sheriff Substitute, had acquitted that person. The Sheriff Substitute, being obliged to report to his superior, replied that it was because "The Crown witnesses did not come up to their precognitions at either of the crofters' trials." I corroborate to the fullest the statement that such an interference on the part of the Sheriff with the Sheriff Substitute in the administration of justice is not only unjustifiable, but such as has never before been brought under the observation of the public. The publication was made in February, 1885, and the trial took place in March; and, this being so, on what ground was the statement published by the Sheriff to the whole of the Highlands, before the man was tried, that Norman Stewart was a ringleader of the mob? One of the reasons put forward by Sheriff Ivory for the publication of the document was his wish to clear himself from the charges brought against him by the Rev. Mr. M'Callum, of Waternish. How was Mr. M'Callum treated subsequently? Some time after these charges had appeared, Mr. M'Callum was going to preach for a friend on Sunday, and having to go a considerable distance from his home, travelled on the Saturday night, when he was arrested and taken a great number of miles to Portree, being only released on the following Monday on a bail of £100. And, what happened after this? Why, no further proceedings were taken against Mr. M'Callum. The proceedings of Sheriff Ivory and his subordinates stand condemned by the documents on the Table. I may add that I have great fault to find with the Treasury. I refer to the Treasury Minute, dated 23rd March, 1888. In it the Permanent Secretary states to the Board—

> "At the same time, my Lords fully recognzie the trying nature of the work with which the Sheriff was entrusted, and his great and natural sense of irritation at the serious and unfounded charges of misconduct then made against him. Moreover, their Lordships desire to give full support to any public officer who acts to the best of his judgment in the discharge of his duty."

Now, what right has the Treasury to say this? I do not think my language too strong when I say that it is an audacious thing for the Treasury to support Sheriff Ivory in this way, when it is known that public inquiries into his conduct have been made over and over again and refused. With regard to what the people of the Highlands think of Sheriff Ivory, they know that though he has been whitewashed over and over again—they cannot but recollect that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has more than once stopped the sending of troops and gunboats that might have done a great deal of mischief in the Highlands. I say of Sheriff Ivory that, by many things he has done, he has lost the confidence of the Highland people. They say that if there be one name more obnoxious to them than another it is that of Sheriff Ivory, and this not because he happens to be Sheriff of the county, but from the high-handed way in which his proceedings were over and over again carried out in matters which affected the minds of the people. And I would point to the course the debate of to-night has taken. When the case used to come before the House years ago there were very few who took notice of it, but on this occasion we have hon. and right hon. Members taking the matter up, not only on these benches, but on the front bench above the Gangway, and, for my part, I beg to thank those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have been induced to aid our action. As far as the people of the Highlands are concerned, it is to them inexplicable how the present Government should mix themselves up in a matter with which they have no concern whatever; and, although they have a right to stand up for any official who has done his duty, they will, in passing the Vote now before the Committee, do that which those who are most affected by it will hear of with deep regret.

*MR. W. H. SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

DR. CLARK (Caithness): We can bring it up again. One illegality follows another.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 136; Noes 67.—(Division List, No. 22.)

Question put accordingly,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, for certain Expenses of the Law Agent in Scotland for Government Departments."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 137; Noes 77.—(Div. List, No. 23.)

(2.) £24,690, Supplementary, Public Education.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SWAZILAND

(3.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £28,310, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, for certain Charges connected with the Orange River Territory, the Transvaal, Zululand, Bechuanaland, the Island of St. Helena, and the High Commissioner for South Africa."

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I beg to call attention to the fact that there are not 40 Members present.

The House was counted, and 40 Members were found to be present.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I have given notice of several reductions of this Vote; but as they refer to totally different subjects, I hope you, Sir, will allow me to move them separately. In the first place, I beg to move to reduce the Vote by £250, the cost of Missions to Tongaland and Swaziland, and I do so for the purpose of obtaining information as to those Missions, and also as to the state of things existing in those countries. I want to know what has been the result of the Missions? I want to know whether we have a Resident or an Adviser in Swaziland? I want to know who is Mr. O. Shipstone, who I see mentioned in the papers? I want to know who he is, and what his present position there is? We have been told that by the Convention of London we have bound ourselves to maintain the independence of Swaziland; but my impression is, that that Convention has been broken in a good many particulars since it was made. At all events it seems to me there is no use whatever in guaranteeing the independence of Swaziland, if we really leave the country a prey to adventurers. If any sort of independent Government is to be maintained there, some civilized Power must protect it. If we are not prepared to protect it properly, we had better leave it alone altogether. Swaziland is much in the same position as Lord Salisbury has said Samoa is in—that is to say, the native Government cannot stand alone. If there is any interference it would be better it should be on the part of one Power. In the case of Swaziland there is not the serious quarrel between great Powers which there is in the case of Samoa; indeed, I think we are probably in a position to deal with the native

Government if we are so wishful. I am not for annexation of any kind, for we have enough on our hands already, but I have always thought that if we are to extend our interests in Africa, it is better we should do so in districts near the sea—not in the far interior of the country, where we are altogether shut in by other territories. Now, as to Swaziland, I think we ought either to thoroughly, effectually, and practically protect the native Government in the independence we have guaranteed them, or wash our hands altogether of any responsibility. I confess the affairs of Swaziland have no great interest for me, and that probably I should not have thought of bringing them before the Committee if it had not been for something I read the other day in the newspapers. It seems that a Committee of white traders have established themselves in the country, and that they have passed a tariff of import duties, with what authority I do not know. I see it was unanimously resolved by this Committee—and this is what I most strongly object to—"that no Asiatic shall be allowed to trade in Swaziland." I do not wonder that they were unanimous; traders generally like to exclude rival traders. If the Government profess to exercise any influence in the country, I want to know whether they will permit this gross monopoly on the part of the white traders; whether they will allow our Indian subjects to be shut out of that country? I am afraid the Resolution I have quoted is only a symptom of a feeling which is growing very widely in the South of Africa, and especially in our own Colony at Natal. There is no objection in Natal to the Indian community as long as they are represented by men acting in the capacity of hewers of wood and drawers of water, but the moment Indians by their own industry and their own talent begin to accumulate property and to rise in the world——

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is travelling beyond the item. The item his Motion refers to only justifies discussion as to our relations with Swaziland.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: I only referred to the state of things at Natal as illustrative of that at Swaziland, the traders in Swaziland being a kind of overflow from Natal. I want some assurance that the interests of the Swazies will be cared for, and that if we have any influence in the country it will be exercised most strongly in favour of the natives. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by £250.

Motion made, and Question proposed: "That Item D. 3, £250 for High Commissioners' Travelling, be omitted from the proposed Vote."

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS): The hon. Member proposes to reduce the Vote in connection with the Missions to Tongaland and Swaziland.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: Swaziland.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Also Tongaland.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: My observations applied to Swaziland only.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Then, with regard to Swaziland, I have to say that the money set down was expended in defraying the expenses of Colonel Martin, who went to Swaziland to meet the Portuguese Commissioner and also the Commissioner of the Transvaal with regard to the question of delimitation respecting Delagoa Bay. That question was satisfactorily settled at the time, and the Portuguese Government accepted the award, although it was not very favourable to the views they put forward. The hon. Member asks me what we intend to do with Swaziland, and he said we had either a Protectorate or we had not. I can inform the hon. Gentleman we have no Protectorate, and that, therefore, we are not responsible for what takes place. It is perfectly true that a Committee of 15 members exists in Swaziland; but those gentlemen are not in the slightest degree, directly or indirectly, connected with the British Government, and we have no control whatever over them. The hon. Member alluded to Mr. Shepstone. Mr. Shepstone is simply a private individual, who is the head of the White Committee of 15, and the principal Adviser of King Umbandine. I do not know whether this Committee has made a stipulation that no Asiatic shall trade in Swaziland; but if such a restriction exists Her Majesty's Government have nothing to do with it—it depends entirely on the will of King Umbandine and his European advisers. Therefore, it is not necessary for me to pursue the subject further. Neither in

Tongaland nor Swaziland have the Government any direct or indirect influence whatever.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I should be obliged if the Under Secretary will say whether any portion of this £250 represents expenses incurred by Sir Hercules Robinson or by Sir Sydney Sheppard?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: No portion of it.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Last year I asked my hon. Friend (Sir G. Campbell) not to discuss this question upon the main Vote, in the hope that Her Majesty's Government would do something in South Africa, and that this year we would know what their South African policy is. But, as far as we know, Her Majesty's Government have no policy in South Africa, but that of drift. We are spending money foolishly in Swaziland, just as we are in every other portion of South Africa where we can get a chance to do so. The Under Secretary tells us the Government have no control over the whites. That is perfectly true, but it is a fact of which the Government ought to be ashamed. Although you repudiate control, you are morally responsible for the condition of things in South Africa. To repudiate control in Swaziland is to my mind dishonourable on the part of the Government. Swaziland is a portion of the Transvaal; it was cut away from the Transvaal when we gave that country back to the Boers, because it was principally inhabited by natives themselves. I thought at the time the arrangement made by the Convention was a very wise one, for it gave the people an opportunity of developing their own civilization. If Her Majesty's Government had aided and abetted the Swazies in keeping Swaziland for themselves, we might have witnessed an improvement there similar to that which has taken place in Basutoland. King Umbandine has granted mineral concessions over nearly the whole of his territory, and sometimes the same concessions have been given to different persons, so that the strongest hold what was given to them against their weaker competitors at present. Swaziland is nearly parcelled out amongst white men, principally from Natal, the bulk of them being British subjects. These men control the country; they have set up a Custom House, and they levy blackmail on all goods passing through the country into the native territory and into the Transvaal. The result is that the Swazies have no chance at all in their own country. The Government will not even carry out the policy of their own High Commissioner. Sir Hercules Robinson has pointed out to them that a condition of anarchy exists in the country, and has strongly recommended them to modify the treaty. You will allow the thing to go on until you have a row between the King and his White Councillors, and then somebody will have to step in, and you will have to spend, perhaps, half a million of money. It will be the old story of Bechuanaland over again. You are spending a little money now, and you will probably be compelled to send a big expedition by and by. I do not know what on earth Her Majesty's Government intend to do, but the poor unfortunate natives are being driven away from their own territory and the condition of things is truly deplorable. From what I have seen myself, I know that the people are being demoralized by that great engine of civilization, grog—that is to say, bad Hollands gin, and a species of Scotch whisky which is called rum. You may shirk responsibility as much as you like; but you are morally bound either to take over Swaziland yourselves or to let the Transvaal take it over. I do not expect that you will offer it to the Transvaal; and the difficulty will be how you are going to get there, as you cannot do so through your own territory. Some of my hon. Friends think that the Transvaal Government does not behave very well to the native races. All I can say is that the natives who live under that Government have more comfort and a higher degree of civilization than in any British Colony in South Africa.

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I should like to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Baron Henry de Worms) why this particular item comes in the High Commissioner's Vote. There is, I believe, to be a considerable agitation in this country respecting our rule in South Africa, and it is news to me to find Swaziland and Pondoland placed under the Vote for the Commissioner, I should have expected to find them under the Special

Commissioner's Vote. No doubt, however, the High Commissioner is now the representative of Imperial authority in South Africa, and I am one of those who are determined to see the Imperial policy in South Africa made consistent and strong, and to prevent its drifting. I think my right hon. Friend, the Under Secretary, has explained the official view of this Vote, but I do not think he has yet stated the views of Her Majesty's Government as to the consequences of the mission. I suppose we should not have sent a mission to Swaziland if we had not felt that we had a duty to perform to the Swazis. We are bound by duty and honour to look after them, and are also bound from the point of view of our material interests to do so. There are many hundreds of thousands of British capital invested there. I should like to ask my right hon. Friend whether he has heard that a foreign nation is supposed to be buying up concessions in Swaziland, with a view to putting an end to the independence of the Swazi nation? We are also bound to look after the Swazis by the tie of honour. Not only did we originally guarantee the independence of Swaziland, but we are bound by the Convention of 1884 to uphold and maintain its independence. I hope my right hon. Friend will be able to tell us that the Government are considering the policy of placing in Swaziland a resident Commissioner to represent the Imperial Government. We cannot, looking at the matter either from a business point of view or from the point of view of our own honour, allow the Swazis to pass under the control of adventurers, and I think the first step we ought to take is that of appointing a Resident or Commissioner in the country.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): There is much force in what has been said by my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), and also by the hon. Member opposite (Sir G. Baden-Powell), but I must say I am not aware that we have entered into any obligations towards the Swazis which should bind us to protect them against invasion. I am not prepared to object to the policy stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, when he told us that the Government had no influence in Swaziland. At the same time I want to know why it is, if the Government have no influence in Swaziland, we are asked to vote this money for the demarcation of the boundary line. If we can do nothing there to protect either our white or our coloured subjects, should this House be asked to pay this £250? It seems to me that if Her Majesty's Government are really determined consistently to follow out the policy of non-interference which has been announced by the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary to-night, all we can do is to say to the Swazis, "Be independent if you can; we are not going to protect you." The only interference we can exercise is to say to Germany and other Foreign Powers that we think we may fairly claim that they should not interfere in the country. As the Under Secretary has given no reason why we should pay this £250, I feel compelled to divide the House Committee against the item.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I shall certainly support the Motion to reduce the Vote, because the explanation which has been given to us is of the vaguest and most unsatisfactory character. It is quite clear that if we have nothing whatever to do with Swaziland we ought not to be called upon to pay anything for it; and if we have anything to do with it we need some further explanation. It is quite clear that, under cover of these missions to different parts of South Africa, during the past six months, there has been an amount of disgraceful jobbery, which the Government has not been perfectly straightforward about in its answers in this House. The answers to questions put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) and myself, with reference to the High Commissioner, have been absolutely contradictory in terms. Probably a modification was made in the answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, because of his greater influence in this House, but it was a modification of an exceedingly serious character, and, unless some further explanation is given, it will not only be my duty to divide on this Vote, but to take every opportunity of getting at the truth of the matter. When you find the High Commissioner figuring in connection with transactions such as that to which the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has alluded, it is time something was done in this House to prevent the recurrence of scandals of so disgraceful a character.

*SIR W. BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.): No one who has read the papers or who has known anything about South Africa during the last year or two can feel that the Government has taken up as strong a position in regard to that part of the world as we have a right to expect. If we are to hold these territories, many of which I believe to be all important to this country, we must know precisely on what terms they are to be held. Our High Commissioner ought to be a Commissioner over all our interests in South Africa, and should not be mixed up with any particular Colony. How can a man who is Governor of the Cape Colony do justice to the great imperial interests we have in South Africa?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is entering into too large a subject. The Question must be restricted to the missions.

*SIR W. BARTTELOT: Of course, Sir, I obey your ruling, though I would point out that at the head of these Estimates appear the words: "High Commissioner, travelling." Well, I may say I look on these questions of Swaziland and Delagoa Bay as being of the greatest importance to this country. We might have had Delagoa Bay, which would have formed an admirable connecting link between Natal and Swaziland, and in my judgment we ought not to have left a stone unturned till we had obtained Delagoa Bay. I know the views and opinions of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary; I do not think his policy would be in unison with the policy which he has expressed to-night. My belief is that if he was in charge of the Colonial Office he would adopt such a policy that we should hold our own in South Africa, and I hope he will be able to express an opinion more in consonance with the views held in this country than he has done up to the present.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) and another hon. Member said they could not understand why, if we had nothing to do with Swaziland, we should be called upon to pay £250 for a mission there. The explanation is very simple. The Convention of London of 1884 provided that the independence of Swaziland within the boundary line should be fully recognized. The mission of Colonel Martin is simply for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of that treaty by arranging with the Portuguese Commissioner that the limits there laid down should be strictly observed. As to the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), his arguments were extremely ingenious. The hon. Member was very indignant that we should do nothing in Swaziland, and went on to say that if we did anything we should be violating the Convention of 1884. But he blamed the Government all the same. Therefore, we are blamed for not doing that which he considers we could not by any possibility do. Having told us that we ought to do it, and having satisfied himself that by the Treaty of 1881 we could not do it, he then most ingeniously suggests that we should allow Swaziland to pass into the hands of the Transvaal Republic. Now, Sir, the hon. Member is a very able advocate of the interests of the Transvaal Republic, and I cannot always in my own mind divide the hon. Member for Caithness from the Consul-General of the Boer Republic. It is somewhat difficult for me to do so on an occasion of this kind, when I find that under guise of an attack upon the Government he suggests that we should be parties to assisting the Transvaal to take Swaziland, notwithstanding the Convention of 1884. If his argument means anything it means that. Well, Sir, I say that Her Majesty's Government will enter into no such arrangement. My hon. Friend the Member for Sussex (Sir. W. Barttelot) said he hoped we would pursue a firm and just policy in South Africa. It is because we feel it necessary to have a just and firm policy that we conceive our first duty to be not to violate international Conventions, but to respect them to the utmost. If the course of events should render it necessary either for the protection of the natives or for the security of British interests generally to modify those Conventions, Her Majesty's Government will not shrink from the responsibility of so doing. But between modifying them and breaking them, as was suggested by the hon. Member for Caithness, there is a vast and important difference. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) asked me a question with regard to the mission to Tongaland. That mission was undertaken by Colonel Martin for the purpose of cementing the friendly relations which exist between us and the Queen of Tongaland. I hope now the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) will withdraw his Motion.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): Of course, we have got the usual reply from the Treasury Bench. It is the old story. The Government have nothing to say as far as the facts or arguments are concerned; but they always talk about the Member for Caithness being Consul General for the Boer Republic, and they also give me the credit of being the author of the policy recommended to them by Her Majesty's High Commissioner and which they published a couple of years ago. All I say is that you should either carry out the advice of Her Majesty's Commissioner or take Swaziland yourself. It is said that by the Convention of 1884 our hands and the hands of the Transvaal are tied; but it is perfectly well-known that the Transvaal is quite willing that the Treaty should be modified, because the conditions are changed. The Treaty was made at a time when there were very few white men there. Now there are many white men, and the land chiefly belongs to white men.

Mr. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies has not seen fit to give the House any assurance whatever with regard to protection being afforded to Indian traders in connection with exploiters from Natal. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not encourage people from Natal in using these Indians as hewers of wood and drawers of water, as remarked by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell).

*Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I think we ought to support this Vote, in order to enable Her Majesty's Government to carry out their existing policy. Those who oppose the Vote oppose a consistent policy in South Africa.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 64; Noes 156.—(Div. List, No. 24.)

Original Question again proposed.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF BECHUANALAND.

*Sir G. CAMPBELL: The next reduction I have to submit to the Committee has relation to a larger question—the grant of £28,000 in aid of the administration in Bechuanaland. The first complaint I have to make is that such a very large question should be shoved through Committee at the tail end of a Supplementary Vote, and that it has not been submitted to us at a proper time. The Vote really raises the whole question whether Her Majesty's Government ought to undertake on the part of, and at the expense of, the people of this country, the administration of a vast territory in Central Africa running up to the Zambesi. I do not even know that the Government purpose to stop at the Zambesi. I believe they purpose to claim navigation up to the district where the Militant Missionaries are now carrying on operations on Lake Nyassa, seeking to extend their influence over the series of great lakes in Central Africa. Whether we look at the ulterior prospect or the present extent of territory, the question is a large one indeed, and it comes before us for the first time in the form of a challenge to a Vote in Supply. The Chancellor of the Exchequer taunted us the other day with wasting upon such small items as the allowances of gamekeepers in Windsor Park the time we might devote to the elucidation of great Colonial questions; but I think the fault lies with the Government and their arrangement of these Votes, putting those that raise important questions of Colonial policy last. Last Session, too, the time of private Members was appropriated, and we had to find such opportunities as we could in Supply, and, in consequence, important Votes were rushed through in one sitting. An attempt was made in a manner I will not describe, to rush the Supplementary Vote through after midnight. We defeated that intention, and now we have to decide upon this Vote, and give a decision on the policy of the Government, or rather, I should say, the want of policy, that has allowed us to drift as we did in relation to Swaziland, and as we now appear to be drifting in relation to this great territory between Cape Colony and the Zambesi. This great territory was in the first instance taken, as the Colonial Secretary told a Deputation, on the understanding that Cape Colony would take it, and the noble Lord went on to say—"I will not pledge myself that it will not be offered to Cape Colony again." This is an illustration of our indefinite Colonial policy. This Vote, remember, does not represent the whole expenditure. The Colonial Secretary was frank in his declaration to the deputation. He said—

> "I hope you will support those Members of Parliament who will be prepared to vote a very large increase that must appear in the sums upon the Estimates for the Colony."

I am afraid Members do not realize the enormous burden we are laying on the country by this Vote to-night. We pass a Vote for £28,000 for Police in Bechuanaland, and that for only a portion of the year. I understand that the whole year will not be less than £66,000; and with the indication of further expenditure thrown out by the Colonial Secretary, hundreds of thousands of expenditure will result from our accepting the position in which we find ourselves placed. I hope the Under Secretary will, at all events, explain what the expenditure of the year will be, and tell us how far the extension of territory is to go. I maintain we are not justified in passing these Votes and simply allowing the Government to drift with the course of events, while still the British taxpayer has heavier burdens put upon him. If this great burden must be imposed, why should the Government endeavour to smuggle the Vote through at the fag end of the financial year; why do they not boldly and frankly come forward, explain their policy and invite the decision of the House? Hitherto the Government have drifted in these South African transactions into taking more territory, without any definite idea what to do with it, and the result has been a continuously increasing strain on the resources of the mother country. The Government have taken territory they had much better have left alone. I cannot understand why they should annex these vast territories in Central Africa. It is no advantage to our self-governing colonies to have their attention diverted from their own resources to the administration of native territories. If we take over these territories we should face the administrative as well as the financial question. In the Bechuanaland territory we have no access to the sea, we have the Germans on one side the Portugese or another, and an independent colony or another. We are at the mercy of Cape Colony in regard to roads and railway for communication. If we do take over the territory we are bound to protect the Natives and not make administration a cover for scandalous concessions to speculators. We are bound to prevent the land and minerals of the country being disposed of to land jobbers and concession mongers. What is the distinction I would ask in these matters, between British Colonies, or British Protectorate and British influence? If British influence becomes a British Protectorate and perhaps annexation follows then the British people are deprived of their rights through this system of concessions. What is the meaning of these great concessions made by Lo Bengula to Mr. Rudd? What is the political reason why Sir Hercules Robinson approved of them? The result is that with concessions here and concessions there the whole country is a prey to concession mongers. I want some explanation as to the political reasons why it is desirable to encourage this annexation, and in order to elicit some opinion as to whether or not it is right that we should sanction these proceedings, I move to reduce the Vote by £20,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item E, Grant in Aid of British Bechuanaland, be reduced by £20,000."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

***MR. BAUMANN** (Peckham): Though this is only a supplementary Estimate, and though the sum the Government ask for is a very small one, I think the discussion is of great importance, from the fact that I understand the High Commissioner is shortly coming home, and that a new High Commissioner Governor of Cape Colony will be sent out. I think that before we vote another shilling to be spent in Bechuanaland we are entitled to ask the Government three questions, and we are entitled to get plain answers to these three questions. We are entitled, I think, to ask, in the first place, do Her Majesty's Government intend to extend the British Protectorate in Bechuanaland northward to Matabeland and Kamaland? The second question I think we are entitled to put is, does the Colonial Secretary intend to hand Bechuanaland over to Cape Colony; and, thirdly, I wish to know whether the Colonial Secretary intends to continue the present absurd and mischievous combination of the two offices of High Commissioner and Governor of Cape Colony? In connection with the first question as to the extension of the Protectorate, I think we have seen the disastrous effects of that shadowy abstraction which nobody knows the meaning of, "the sphere of British influence," in the concession made by a native chief to Mr. Rudd, by which mining rights have been given over a vast tract of territory to the sum of £1,200 a year, and with regard to which the Secretary to the Colonies tells us the Colonial Office has no right to interfere. What is the meaning of this sphere of British influence, and how comes it that in 1888 an Englishman applied for a similar concession and was snubbed by the High Commissioner, and was told that no such grant could be given without the sanction of the High Commissioner, and now, nearly a year afterwards, Mr. Rudd, an Africander, the partner of Rhodes, has obtained that concession without difficulty and with the sanction of the High Commissioner? It is a singular circumstance in this connection that Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Rudd's partner, a short time ago appeared at a meeting of the De Beers Mining Company holding the proxy of Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner himself. I will not dwell upon the influences brought to bear upon the High Commissioner at the Cape; but certainly, under the circumstances, it does not appear to me a very dignified position for the High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape to occupy. We can trace from beginning to end in the record of the opinions of Sir Hercules Robinson the sinister influence of Cape politics. The second question we ought to have answered is this: Is Bechuanaland to be handed over to Cape Colony or is it not? By deputations and by questions in this House nothing can be got out of Lord Knutsford, except that it is not the present intention of Her Majesty's Government to hand Bechuanaland over to the Cape. We want to know not only the present, but the ultimate, intention of Her Majesty's Government, for already £1,250,000 has been spent upon Bechuanaland to which Cape Colony has not contributed one sixpence, and before we vote any more money in this direction we are entitled, I think, to an explicit avowal from the Colonial Office as to their intentions. After the disgraceful story of Basutoland, I for one protest against Bechuanaland being handed over to Cape Colony seeing that by a lavish expenditure of British sovereigns and British troops we have rescued the country against anarchy. The keynote of Lord Knutsford's Colonial policy is a feverish anxiety, if not a fixed resolve, to escape responsibility at all costs; and it is that policy which has brought about the Zulu wars, the Boer war, the Bechuanaland expedition, and the Basutoland fiasco. Then, as to the third question, is the Colonial Secretary going to continue the present junction of the High Commissioner and the Governor of Cape Colony? That junction has proved most disastrous to Bechuanaland. In 1884 Sir Thomas Scanlen, then Prime Minister, was in favour of the Cape contributing to cost of Bechuanaland, but he was driven out of office, and Mr. Upington, who acceded to power, proposed that England should pay the cost and Cape Colony should administer the Protectorate, and now Sir Hercules Robinson grows bolder still and advocates the annexation of Bechuanaland to the Cape. The fact is, it is quite impossible for one man to serve two masters—namely, the Cape Parliament, with an occasional Dutch majority, avowedly hostile to and jealous of British influence, and the Imperial Government at home. You might as well expect the Governor of Quebec to act as Viceroy of Canada. The whole thing reminds me of nothing more than a servant in one of Molière's plays, who did the double duty of coachman and gardener, and who requested his master, when he had anything to say about the stable, to speak in his right ear, and when he had anything to say about the garden to speak in his left ear. The junction of these two offices is anomalous and mischievous in its results. The ultimate question which we have to face in South Africa is whether the English or the Dutch are to be masters. Of course, the Cape Government are in favour of maintaining the present junction of the two offices, because it places the key of the situation in their hands and makes them masters of the destinies of South Africa. I am certain of this that if the Colonial Secretary continues to allow his Imperial policy to be dictated by the Dutch majority of the Cape Parliament, we shall have a civil war upon us before we know where we were. Young Englishmen who are flocking into South Africa will not submit to have their destinies controlled and to be tyrannized over by a Dutch majority in the Cape Parliament.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I think I may ask to be allowed to draw the attention of the Committee back again to the Vote before the House, that is £28,000 for extra police in Bechuanaland. As far as Bechuanaland is concerned the Government seem to have a policy, and it is a policy of police. The hon. Member who has just sat down advocated a policy on the part of Her Majesty's Government which I should be very glad to support if I thought that in the future the South African States and territory would be governed on principles of common sense, but as I find that our Crown Colonies now are governed on principles entirely different from that, I am not in a position to support the proposal that will be made by-and-bye, and I think I will say something on the other side. But I want to tell you what you are voting the money for and why you are doing it. I have here from Her Majesty's Government something in defence of this policy. Since we occupied Bechuanaland the population, white and black, has become reduced, the revenue is not increasing, the country is not progressing in any sense of the term, and that is because the Government have only one policy—a policy of police—and the one thing that is preventing the development of British Bechuanaland and makes it the laughing stock of the whole of South Africa is this policy of police. I should like to bring before the House some figures with reference to this Crown Colony. In 1886 the revenue was £6,700 and the expediture £110,000, of which £84,253 was spent on the police. In 1887 the estimated revenue was £16,000, but alas! there was a decreasing population, and the revenue fell to £9,690; and the expenditure was £105,650, of which £79,000 was spent on the police. Last year the estimated revenue was to be £13,000, but during the first five months only £3,163 came, and under pressure the outlay on the police was to be reduced to £59,929. This round £60,000 has been spent and now £20,000 more is asked for. I want to ask the Government what they want the police for? They have a large armed police force in Bechuanaland, like the Irish Constabulary, and, as a military force, it can only affect two powers, either the Boers in the Transvaal Republic or the Matabeles. Well, your police force to deal with the Transvaal Republic would be utterly useless—you would require an army—and if you are going to keep this as a Crown Colony, and desire to keep it secure from aggression, I would strongly urge upon the Government the desirability of having a much stronger force than these police to deal with the Matabeles. Well, if a military force is required in Bechuanaland, will the Government tell me why, when they can get men at a shilling a day to serve them, they should prefer to pay six shillings in South Africa? Bechuanaland, so far as climate is concerned, is one of the finest countries in the world. It would be a splendid place to send your young soldiers to for, say, twelve months, on the way out to India. It would thoroughly set them up and fit them for their duties in India, and then, again, if your men, coming back from India could remain a couple of years or so in Bechuanaland, it would thoroughly refresh them after the fatigues of India, and the climate, being a medium one, would fit them in some degree for facing the climate of a cold country like ours. The country is from four to six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and in the summer time you have there a splendid rain and a cool wind—what you may call a champaign air. I maintain, therefore, that instead of paying police 6s. a day we might very advantageously employ our Indian troops here at a 1s. a day. I contend that Bechuanaland is as much a part of the British Empire as the Isle of Wight, and that if it is aggression you fear you could prevent it more effectually by Imperial troops. If you keep men in Bechuanaland for warlike purposes you want an army. All the money thrown away in this country is spent upon the police. There was a school for white children, and land was given to support it; but the school ceased to exist because the Government took the land away, and the condition of things now in this big British Colony is this, that throughout the length and breadth of it there is not a single school for white children. Sir Sidney Sheppard begs and prays you to give him a school, but you will not give him that—you give him 200 more police at a cost of £28,000. On page 5 of the last Blue Book issued, Sir Sidney Sheppard urges you to give favourable consideration to the proposal for making some expenditure on education. Again, your sanitary arrangements are as bad as they can be. In the capital of the country your prisoners in gaol are dying of gaol fever, and yet we learn that the only medical man in the country is a hundred miles from the capital. What is the character of the police force in Bechuanaland, and what is it used for? I have been asked to bring this matter before the House by the Rev. Mr. Brown, the successor of Dr. Moffatt, in the Kuru country. In a letter he has sent me, the whole of which I cannot read, as I do not wish to make the House blush, he says:

> "When I think of the British taxpayer having to pay a large sum of money every year to keep up Bechuanaland, I am thoroughly disgusted, and if you were here your blood would boil with indignation, as mine does."

He goes on to say that crimes are committed by the magistrates, but as those persons would have no opportunity of replying here, I will not read what he says. He declares that the only work the men of the police force seem to do is that of seducing the native women, and leaving behind them numbers of half-caste children. He says that two blots stain the country, namely, drunkenness and fornication, and he declares that to his mind this is a shameful waste of British money. He says that the Chief of Police does nothing that he knows of but hunt, and usually takes an escort of police with him to beat the bushes, and that as a consequence the men go by the name of Carrington's rangers. The men boast of being able to procure as many native girls as they please for brandy. Now, I myself am prepared to say that to a certain extent there is some truth in these statements. I have heard complaints from Montsoia similar to those made by the Rev. Mr. Brown. I maintain that if you spent the money you are squandering on the police for the purpose of giving educational facilities in the Colony and of making a land survey, and would make provision for bringing emigrants into the country instead of carrying out those bogus schemes which we saw last year, where we saw people taken out to places where six or eight months in the year there is no water, you would be doing praiseworthy work. I would ask the Government what they intend to do with regard to Bechuanaland as a whole. There are five tribes between the Matabele River and our colony. We take in two-and-a-half of the tribes, and another tribe is north of our Protectorate, but that portion of the territory is practically worthless, the wood having been cut down. That portion which is under our Protectorate is really the finest country in South Africa. It is a land where you can have splendid farms and good colonies, and not occupied by any game. There are very few natives in the whole territory—not 30,000, I believe. This is the place where concessions are being given, and where you have the same thing being carried out in our British territory that you had in Swaziland. I will tell you how the rights of the natives have been protected. In the last Report of Sir S. Sheppard, we are told that a question arose between a native chief, Kama Sechele, and certain Commissioners, and that it had been referred to an assistant Commissioner to report. Then the Report says—

> "A form of mineral concession has been carefully supplied with a view to protect the interests of the Chiefs in the Protectorate, and that in future it be recommended for adoption in all cases."

After Sir S. Sheppard left, Mr. Woolatt, his surveyor, remained behind, and got the concession from the Chief without the missionaries knowing anything at all about it, and without the Council knowing anything at all about it. The man drinks and is in his dotage, and, without his son knowing anything of it,

Dr. Clark

Mr. Woolatt got this concession from him. Mr. Williams, a missionary, told me the whole of the particulars 18 months ago. By this concession, this man Woolatt gets 400 square miles, and all the wood and water, for £400 a-year, and there is no limitation of time. I have seen woods sold for £20 where £40,000 worth of wood could be taken out, not to speak of the mineral rights. But here is the 400 square miles granted to an individual under the British Government. The same thing has occurred to old Sechele, but the son of Sechele says he does not intend to carry the transaction out. And you will have considerable difficulty whenever these men come to attack these concessions, because the chiefs and the head men are opposed to them. That is how you have been guarding the interests of individuals in the Protectorate. As for the Colony itself, well, go there, and you will find nothing but complaints. The unfortunate Montsoia had been put into territory not sufficient for his people, and the head chief, or the king, was telling me when I was up there, 18 months ago, that he had only water for his cattle once in three days; that all of his best lands were taken away from him; and now they have granted locations to bubble companies who write misleading statements, and gull the British public to buy the land taken from those native chiefs. I frankly admit that, as far as some of the farms were concerned, you could not help this; but there were other portions of the territory that might have been made native settlements, and you could have bought out some of those farms for £3,000 or £4,000—here is one that has been got for £400; but, instead of that, you spend £28,000 over this absolutely useless and pernicious police. I want to know, again, having called the attention of the Colonial Secretary to it before, why, when gold was discovered in the land of Montsoia, you did not give him the same rights as are granted to other farmers? His son-in-law, who is in the Transvaal, got £700 a year for prospecting, and you give to every man in Bechuanaland on whose farm gold is discovered the right to peg out 20 claims. When Montsoia wanted to peg out 20 claims, the Crown said, "No; this is Crown land." And this is how the British Government protects the natives! Questions have been raised as to the future. I frankly say that, if you want to have a direct British policy in South African, then you must have somebody to carry out that policy. If you intend to keep Bechuanaland as a Crown Colony, do not throw away £80,000 on useless police. Send a body of soldiers there, and keep the peace with a dozen Europeans and a hundred natives; and if you only spend proportionately as much as the States round about you are spending on education, you will find that you will spend almost as much as you are now paying for police. But, if the present system is to continue, then the best thing would be to hand the territory over to the Cape Colony. The first thing that we ought to do would be to annex the whole of Bechuanaland. You are asking settlers out there because you have decent lands to give them where they can live comfortably. I think the sooner the Protectorate is abolished the better; and the whole of these people would, I know, at once come under the Colony. I daresay that Sechele and Montsoia would stand on their rights. Seven-eighths of the tribes would be very glad to come under our control. Then beyond there is a portion of territory which I do not know whether it would be wise at the present time to take in. Probably it would be better to take it than merely have a Protectorate over it. I think you ought to have power as well as responsibility, and that you ought to be able to prevent in the future in those countries under your control those anarchic methods by which they have been taken by the whites. You ought to serve the interests of the natives, and to prevent the Chiefs selling their lands to white adventurers, and the poor people being eaten up, as they say in South Africa. One thing I would like to say to hon. Gentlemen and to the Colonial Office, and that is that you may require your armed police, unless a more definite policy is carried on regarding the conditions which now subsist between Matabeleland and Kamaland. I believe Kama to be one of the ablest of the chiefs; but since he has come under our Protectorate his action is to try and force all the natives who do not own his sway across to the Transvaal; and claims have been made which, if persisted in, will probably bring about a war between Matabeleland and Kamaland, which is under our Protectorate. If the claim is supported, then there will probably be war in South Africa, and we will be required to fight the Northern Zulus. In regard to the policy pursued in South Africa, it was at first to keep certain people back. There were a number of people going to the Cape Colony to get concessions, and the High Commissioner sent them back, and what the Government ought to do is, to determine the boundary between the Matabeles and the Manwattas—the latter being of weak, and the former a powerful tribe, and unless something of this sort is done we may have trouble in a country 1,500 miles north of the Cape—whither an army would have to march over nearly 700 miles of desert. As to their future policy the Government should determine either on acting on their own responsibility and appointing a Royal Commission, as was promised two years ago by Lord Knutsford, or they should determine on handing the Cape over to the white men and letting them govern it in their own way. If the Cape were thus handed over, the white men there would have to pay the piper, instead of, as at present, the people of this country. The policy hitherto pursued at the Cape is the same bad policy as has been carried out in New Zealand, and will produce wars in South Africa, as it has done in New Zealand, if continued. Let them adopt one policy or the other and adhere to it.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I cannot but express my gratitude to the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Baumann) for having brought before the Committee the concession made nominally to Mr. Rudd, but really to Mr. Rhodes, in the territory to which this Vote refers. An hon. Member has expressed a hope that the Under Secretary for the Colonies will contradict the statement that Mr. Rhodes acted as proxy for the High Commissioner at a company's meeting; but I should be sorry to hear that contradiction, because if it were contradicted I should have to submit proof to the Committee of the actual fact. When we are asked for £78,000 grant for this territory, and influence is being used to put mining lands in the hands of speculators, we have a right to ask, what is the attitude of the Government on the matter? Last May their attitude was clear. Lord Knutsford said the Government would give no countenance to any concession unless concluded with the knowledge and approval of the High Commissioner. That is, that the Government would and did determine what should happen in regard to these concessions; but, in answer to myself, we are practically told that the Government have nothing to do with it—that they are not in a position to express any opinion on it, and now, in answer to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, they disapprove part, and determine to interfere. This is a sudden change.

*SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: There is one point which seems to me to have been forgotten, and that is that in Bechuanaland there are lands for which the British taxpayer has paid dearly, to the amount of £1,500,000, and which it is proposed to hand over to the Cape Colony. I do not fear either Party at the Cape; I believe both are loyal to the Imperial connection. But what I do object to is handing over these lands without due consideration to a Colony which can place obstruction in the way of our countrymen going there. If we hand over these lands to the Cape, I hope it will be on the express condition that British emigrants are to be freely admitted to them. In my opinion, we have not needed so large a police force, except as a frontier force against the Matabeles. I do not believe the Transvaal intend to let the frontier be violated in any way. We are in this dilemma. If the House declines to vote £78,000 now, the idea must at once arise that the British House of Commons is throwing up its Imperial responsibilities. I hope, however, the Government may see its way to reduce this large expenditure on police, but at all costs for this year we must assert our Imperial responsibilities and duties in South Africa.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: It will be admitted by all who have listened to this debate that it has travelled over a very wide area. The simple question before the Committee is a Supplementary Vote for 200 policemen for service in Bechuanaland and its Protectorate. The remarkable statement has been made and repeated that this is a very large force of police; but hon. Members who made that statement seem to ignore the fact that between 1885 and 1886 the force consisted of 150 men more than now. Every successive speaker, but especially the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), has charged the Government with enormously increasing this force, whereas the fact is that, while a short time ago it amounted to 500, it is now only 350. It seems to be thought that this is a very large force; but have hon. Members any idea of the extent of the territory? British Bechuanaland, the Crown colony, contains 40,000 square miles, the Protectorate 120,000, and the sphere of influence 120,000. That would give one policeman to every 800 square miles of territory. I should like to remind the hon. Member for Caithness of what happened in July, 1884 In that case Montsoia and his country had been declared to be under British protection, but no police force had been sent, and before one could be organised Montsoia was over-thrown by filibusters, and the Warren Expedition had to be sent out at an expense of £700,000 in order to restore British prestige. It seems strange that, considering this, so many Members of the House should be anxious to deprive the Government of the vote for 200 extra police. In the autumn of last year the High Commissioner considered it necessary to augment the police force, and his view of the question was strengthened by the Grobler incident in November of that year. The police force is solely for the purpose of protecting the natives themselves against unscrupulous filibusters, and those who, like the hon. Gentleman the Member for Caithness, profess to be so anxious for the welfare of the natives must find better arguments than those the hon. Member has adduced to prove that the Government are acting wrongly in increasing the police force for the purpose I have stated. The hon. Member for Peckham has taken a singularly wide survey of the whole position of affairs in South Africa. For my own part I am not prepared, nor do I think that the Committee will consider it necessary to enter into a discussion of the policy of Her Majesty's Government in South Africa on the question of voting £28,000 to increase the police force by 200 men, but I will answer one or two questions put to me by the hon. Member. The hon. Member asked whether the Government intend to extend the protectorate over Lo Bengula's land. The answer which I have given to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) completely covers that question, to the effect that Her Majesty's Government have hitherto abstained from interfering with any concession granted by Lo Bengula as he is not under British protection; he is independent, and has not, until lately, asked for advice; that he has now, by his messengers, asked for advice, and for someone to be sent to him by the Queen, but that it is not certain whether he wishes a Resident to be always with him, or merely to advise him on the present state of affairs. Then the hon. Member asked whether it is intended to hand over Bechuanaland to the Cape. My answer is, that there is no intention of handing it over in existing circumstances. A third question was, whether the Government intends to keep the two offices of Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner of South Africa together. It is the intention of the Government to keep these two offices together, and the reasons why we think that it is an advantage that those two offices should be kept together are various, but the principal one is, that we are of opinion that, first of all, the question of expense is a very material one, and if the two offices were separate the expense would be greatly increased. Another residence would also be necessary, and as the High Commissioner would have to reside at Cape Town there would be some difficulty with regard to his position. He would have to be provided with a Government House and an adequate staff, and instead of £1,600 the Government would probably have to ask for £50,000. I do not know whether I am justified in going into the further questions raised by the hon. Member for Northampton and others, relative to the concession of Lo Bengula's territory. There again, I can only repeat the answer which I gave to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. I may say emphatically that I do not think that the charges, direct or indirect, made against the Gentleman who has filled for so many years, and so ably, the post of Governor of the Cape should have been made in this House. I have before stated in answer to the hon.

Member for Northampton that there is not a shadow of foundation for supposing that any undue influence has been offered by Sir H. Robinson with respect to the concession of Lo Bengula's country. I have read a letter in this House absolutely denying that statement on behalf of Sir H. Robinson, and for my own part I absolutely deny that Sir H. Robinson exercised any sort of improper influence with regard to the concession by Lo Bengula.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Do I understand the right hon. Gentleman to deny that Mr. Rhodes represented Sir Hercules Robinson, and that he held his proxy at the De Beers Mine meeting?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I stated that Mr. Rhodes acted as proxy for Sir H. Robinson at the meeting of the De Beers Mine, but that connection existed long before the concession. I have the the permission of Sir H. Robinson to read a letter from him with regard to this matter. He says—

> "I have never embarked in either diamond or gold speculations, and have never made one single sixpence. All I have done is this. Some time ago I shifted a portion of some money I had in Colonial Four per Cents. into De Beer shares, having reason to think well of the matter as a permanent investment. I have not sold a share, and consequently have never speculated. Having bought in when the shares were low, my investment has returned me nearly 12 per cent., and I shall be well content if it continues to give such a result in future. You must bear in mind that the diamond mines of Kimberley have long passed the speculative age, and now represent a capital of £17,500,000 paying nearly £1,000,000 a year in dividends, and may be looked upon in pretty much the same light as British railways. In my view there is no more harm in my putting my spare capital into it than there would be in a Minister at home investing in Great Western Preference Stock. If I thought the thing wrong I should not do it at all, but as I do not I have no concealment. As to gold mines, shares, syndicates, and concessions, over which people in London as well as here seem to have simply gone mad, I have never touched one of them, and I am, neither directly or indirectly, interested in anything of the kind. In the furious scramble that has taken place the wildest falsehood has been rife."

*MR. BRADLAUGH: When Sir H. Robinson wrote that, had he or the administrator under his charge any knowledge that that concession to Rudd was being negotiated?

*BARON DE WORMS: I am not aware that either of those persons knew of or exercised any influence, direct or indirect, in the matter. As I pointed out the other day, the Administrator was more than 100 miles away from the Kraal of Lobengula, where the concession was granted. It is said that we ought to extend our Protectorate, but not to enlarge our police force. Such a proposal as that is manifestly absurd. Hon. Gentlemen opposite are always professing the greatest anxiety for the welfare of the native tribes. If they mean anything at all, how do they imagine that we can protect those tribes without police? We are told that certain concessions ought not to be made, though hon. Members know as well as I that the only power the Government possess is to give good advice. The Government are obliged to send police, not only to protect our own interests, but to prevent the native chiefs from quarrelling among themselves. That is one reason why we are extending the police at present. In the British Protectorate the Government will do all in their power to prevent concessions being improperly granted, and within the sphere of British influence we shall do all we can in the way of giving good advice to prevent the granting of concessions which are ridiculous in themselves and a fraud upon the persons to whom they are granted and the public who invest in them. The Government have no soldiers in that territory, and an adequate police force is, therefore, required, not only for the protection of our interests, but for the well-being of those natives whose interests hon. Gentlemen opposite have so much at heart.

*SIR R. FOWLER (London): I do not wish to detain the House for any time, because I believe this question is to be raised by an eminent Member of the House—namely, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), but I desire to express the great disappointment with which I have listened to the statement of my right hon. Friend, especially when he said it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take into consideration the question of separating the Government of Bechuanaland from that of Cape Colony. I hope on another occasion to have an opportunity of expressing my views to the House as regards the Vote itself. I think this country owes a great deal to the Bechuanaland people. The House will remember that the interests of this people were very eloquently advocated by an honoured Member, the late Mr. Forster. I certainly think it desirable that we should not grudge money to advance the interests of those who in the hands of past British Governments have been placed in positions of great difficulty.

*SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I moved my Amendment to reduce this Vote in order to elicit an expression of policy from Her Majesty's Government, and up to three minutes ago, I must say, I thought that my efforts were all in vain. Within the past three minutes, however, I have been somewhat comforted on hearing that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to discourage by every means in their power the granting of these wild concessions. I was extremely glad to hear that, especially, as I have an extract here from a speech of the Under Secretary made in Liverpool the other day, in which the hon. Gentleman says that it is a great mistake to suppose that Her Majesty's Government are opposed to these concessions. On the contrary, he said so long as they were fairly entered into, Her Majesty's Government were anxious to encourage them. I regret that we have not had anything more definite from the hon. Member, but although I feel that most of us disapprove of the policy of Her Majesty's Government in Bechuanaland, and feel that it would have been much better if we had never gone there at all, after the statement of the hon. Member the Under Secretary I think I shall be justified in refraining from pressing the matter to a division.

DR. CLARK: I was glad to hear the last words of the Under Secretary for the Colonies, because I would call his attention to the fact that the form in which all these concessions are granted—which concessions he so eloquently denounces—was drawn up by Sir Sidney Sheppard. It is the official form, and if the House will turn to Sir Sidney's letter of September the 30th, 1887, they will find it there stated that the form had been drawn up to protect the interests of the Chiefs, and would be recommended for adoption in all cases. It has been the adoption of that form which has brought about all these concessions which we now deplore, and I trust that Sir Sidney Sheppard will be made aware of that circumstance. I have not yet heard a single word in favour of this £28,000 extra for the 200 police. The only thing the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary can tell us was that in 1883 there was trouble on the frontier. From 1881 to 1883 there was a war going on there, and during the time that it was going on the Government proclaimed a Protectorate and sent out an unarmed missionary, without even a single policeman, to declare it to be a British Protectorate. This missionary was unable to fulfil that object. But there is no war in Bechuanaland now, and it is as much a British possession as the Isle of Wight; and if anybody attacks it, the whole force of the Crown will be used to overthrow them. Information on these subjects has been kept back from us by the Government, and I protest against such a proceeding. I ask again why the Reports which have been referred to have not been given? In conclusion, I must express a hope that the Government will be able to develop some kind of real policy in South Africa rather than that of drift, which pleases nobody.

*MR. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester): I must say I feel much disappointed at the answer of the hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies to the effect that the High Commissioner must continue to be the Governor of Cape Colony. No doubt, if any man can satisfactorily serve two masters that man is Sir Hercules Robinson; but I do not think that anyone can perform that Herculean task. So far as the ultimate settlement of the Bechuanaland Question is concerned, I trust that the territory will not be handed over to Cape Colony or to the Transvaal; and I hope the Government will re-consider the decision to which we are informed they have come.

Amendment withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Progress reported.

House resumed.

MOTIONS.

PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Nolan, Bill to amend "The Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885," and the Acts amending the same, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Nolan, Mr. Richard Power, and Mr. T. M. Healy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 163.]

NORTH DUBLIN UNION.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to move for a copy of correspondence between the Board of Governors of the Poor of the North Dublin Union and the First Local Government Board in reference to the tenure of the office of Treasurer of the Union by the Bank of Ireland.

AN hon. MEMBER: I object.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask if there is any use in allowing this Motion to remain on the Paper? On Thursday last I gave notice of the Motion, and on Thursday at the request of the Chief Secretary for Ireland I put it down for to-day. Surely I am entitled to move for it now, as I have received no intimation of opposition.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN): I have communicated with the Chief Secretary on the subject of the Return, and he informs me that the Local Government Board see objection to laying this correspondence on the Table, and he also states that it has practically become public already, so that no advantage would be gained by laying it on the Table.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is it the cost of the paper?

MR. SEXTON: We have seen it in fragments in the newspapers, but we cannot get it altogether, which is extremely inconvenient. I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to the matter on the Vote on Account.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

THE KENNINGTON ELECTION.

*MR. CHILDERS: May I ask you, Sir, if you can now give the House any information respecting the return of the Writ for the Kennington election?

*MR. SPEAKER: I may say that, after what took place this afternoon in the House, I at once sent to ascertain what were the facts of the case regarding the non-receipt of the return of the Kennington Writ, and the information I have obtained I will, with the pleasure of the House, lay before it at once. It is this. The return of the Writ was delivered to the Clerk of the Crown at 9 p.m. this day. A telegram has been received from the returning officer, Mr. Abbott, to the effect that the Writ was left at the Kennington Post Office on Saturday morning. The Clerk at the Post Office at Kennington says, in a telegram, that the return of the Writ was sent in a registered envelope, addressed to the Clerk of the Crown, House of Lords, by the 1.45 p.m. despatch on Saturday. The postman whose duty it is to deliver letters to the House of Lords received it from the south-west district at 3.40 on Saturday. He left it for custody in the Central Post Office of the House of Commons in order to deliver it on Monday morning, he thinking that the Crown Office was closed. That was certainly a reasonable mistake, the closing hour of the Crown Office on Saturday being, I believe, two o'clock, by which time the clerks leave the office. It so happened, however, that the office was open as late as five o'clock last Saturday, and there were officers present until that hour, so that, if the Writ had been delivered there, the difficulty which has arisen would not have taken place. He took it out of the Post Office at five minutes to nine o'clock this evening to take it to the Crown Office, where, as I have already stated to the House, it was received at nine o'clock—five minutes later. That is all the information I have been able to obtain, and, if I may say so, it appears that there was certainly some failure in not sending the return of the Writ earlier on Saturday morning. As the House is aware the result of the election was announced in this House at 11 o'clock on Friday night, and an earlier hour on Saturday morning might have been chosen for the despatch of the Writ through the Kennington Post Office. It is the duty of the Returning Officer to deliver it at the Post Office either personally or by his clerk. Many of the Returning Offices in London return the Writs to the Crown Office personally, though there is no statutory obligation on them to do so. That is all the information I am able to give the House.

Question put, and agreed to.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 2.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [MARCH 27.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 19*th March*, 1889.

FACTORS BILL. (NO. 27.)

A Bill to amend and consolidate the Factors Acts—Presented by The Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL. (NO. 9.)

Committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

House adjourned at half past Four o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 19*th March*, 1889.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

QUESTIONS.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE (St. Pancras, N.) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of a statement that he made last Session, that every district should have regulations as to the cleanliness of Dairies and Cowsheds, he has had any reports from the sanitary authorities that his instructions have been carried out, and that a more stringent supervision is being maintained?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's-in-the East): In accordance with the promise I gave last Session, letters have been addressed to the sanitary authorities urging them to make regulations with regard to dairies, cowsheds, and milk-shops, in all cases in which there has been any reason to suppose that such regulations have not yet been made. The Annual Reports, which are now being received from the Medical Officers of Health, are carefully examined with the view of ascertaining whether special communications are necessary in particular cases, and I am glad to be able to say that, in the large majority of cases, the Medical Officers of Health have stated that the inspections of dairies, &c., have been made with satisfactory results.

LICENSING LAWS IN LAGOS.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLE (St. Pancras, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any arrangements have been made for the extension of Licensing Laws to Katanu, a district of the Protectorate of Lagos, in accordance with the desire of the inhabitants, who have petitioned for some means of checking the unrestricted sale of liquor?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, Toxteth): It will be seen, on reference to the report on Lagos, No. 4, presented to Parliament in December last, that the Secretary of State called for a Report from the Governor on this subject, but as yet no reply has been received. Accordingly the Governor was reminded by the last mail.

IRELAND—THE DINGLE UNION.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether charges and allegations, amounting to forgery, were made against officials and others in connection with the Poor Law elections held in Dingle Union in 1888; whether the Board of Guardians have asked the Local Government Board, on the 9th of February, to hold a sworn inquiry; and, whether the request will be granted? The hon. Member also asked whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman has been called to the fact that, in March, September, and October, 1888, Lord Ventry, through his agent, Captain E. A. De Moleyns, recorded 12 property votes, as immediate lessor of under-rated holdings in the Dingle Electoral Division of the Dingle Union, at the Poor Law Elections of the above dates, whilst owing two levies of Poor's Rate for the houses occupied at that time by John Lee and Mary Walsh, in Green Lane, Dingle; whether he is aware that Mrs. Mary Fitzgerald, of Main Street, Dingle, was landlady of said houses until July 1887, when Lord Ventry dispossessed her, and, as she owed rates when dispossessed, he was not entitled to vote in the following March, as those rates were unpaid; whether Mrs. Fitzgerald, although having her rates paid for the house in which she resides, was refused a voting paper in March, September, and October last, as the rates of the two above-mentioned houses were unpaid, whilst Lord Ventry, who was in possession since July 1887, was allowed to vote as if the rates were paid; whether Lord Ventry also voted, as immediate lessor, in the Dunquin Electoral Division last March, whilst owing £1 16s. Poor's Rate for holdings on the townland of Ferriters Quarter in said division; and, whether a representation has been made to the Local Government Board with regard to this matter, and whether an inquiry will be held

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E) said, that the Local Government Board had directed an inquiry into the matter.

DISUSED CARBINES FOR SCHOOL DRILLS.

Mr. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W) asked the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a circular letter recently issued by the head master of Mayall College, Dulwich Road, Brixton, to the parents of boys under his charge in which he says—

> "For the purpose of more thoroughly attending to the physical training of the pupils under my charge, I have received the permission of the Government to form a Cadet Corps in connection with a regiment; carbines have been issued by permission of the Secretary of State for War, and a course of drill has been prescribed that will especially benefit growing boys and improve their physique and deportment, besides being conducive to habits of obedience and orderliness. Tunics and belts will be provided and kept at the headquarters: I have been gazetted Captain by the War Office, and take entire charge and responsibility."

Will he inform the House whether the Government have supplied the carbines; and, if so, from what fund; and, whether any other schools are under the same conditions?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir. Unserviceable carbines, which have been rendered incapable of being fired, have been supplied, on payment, for drill purposes. In answer to the second question, all duly constituted cadet corps and many schools have been so supplied.

INDIA—THE CRAWFORD COMMISSION.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College) asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether it was true that in course of the evidence recently given before the Crawford Commission certain native magistrates, under promise of indemnity from the Bombay Government, gave evidence that they had corruptly purchased their judicial appointments and promotion; whether it is the case that the Judges of the Bombay High Court, Justices Jardine and Birdwood, who are specially responsible for the representatives of inferior courts and offices, have sent to the Bombay Government minutes pointing out the illegality of maintaining on the bench magistrates who had corruptly purchased appointments and promotion, and its fatal effect upon the public estimation of our Law Courts if permitted to be presided over by such men; whether Her Majesty's Government propose to take any steps to prevent a continuation of the scandal against which the Judges of the Bombay

High Court protest; and, whether the Minutes of Justices Jardine and Birdwood, together with a Minute endorsing them by Mr. Justice Scott, having been published in the Press of India, he will lay them before the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The Papers in the Crawford Case, including Mr. Crawford's Memorial, arrived by mail yesterday. They are being dealt with with the utmost promptitude consistent with a due consideration of the important issues involved. The Secretary of State is of opinion that any statement at this moment in Parliament on the subject would be detrimental to the interests of the public service.

DR. CAMERON: Will the hon. Gentleman present Papers on the particular branch of the case to which my question refers?

SIR J. GORST: That branch is a very important part of the case, and among other branches it is undergoing careful and anxious consideration. I cannot make any promise as to Papers.

DR. CAMERON: Then I will take an opportunity of calling attention to these Papers, as they appear in the Indian Press.

TRADE SOCIETIES.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Postmaster General whether Trade Societies and Branches of Trade Societies have been permitted, subject to the approval of the Secretary to the General Post Office, to invest their funds in the Post Office Savings Banks, without restriction as to amount, for a period of a quarter of a century; whether recently some societies or branches of societies have been refused so to invest their funds; and, if so, by what authority, and for what reasons; whether some such societies, being obliged by their rules to keep separate accounts, such as those for sick and other benefit purposes and those for trade purposes, are forbidden to keep separate accounts for such separate fund; whether the recent regulations as to the signatures of trustees are disregarded as regards withdrawal of amounts and otherwise; and whether, in view of the absence of statutory regulations, the Government will propose such legislation as will prevent misconception and annoyance to the lawfully constituted bodies herein referred to?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The facts as stated in the first and second paragraphs of the hon. Member's question are, as I pointed out to him in my reply of the 28th ult., substantially correct. I am still in communication with the National Debt Commissioners on the subject, and I confidently hope that all difficulties will shortly be surmounted. With regard to the third paragraph, I would state that the Savings Bank regulations do not permit any person or society to have more than one account, although, for my part, I can see no reason why this rule should not be relaxed in the case of such societies as those referred to, seeing that they can place their funds on deposit without limit as to amount. Indeed, I was anxious when the regulations of 1888 were under consideration to make such exemption. With regard to paragraphs four and five, I would refer the hon. Member to the latter part of the reply to a question asked by him on the 26th ult. I am not prepared at the moment to state whether fresh legislation will be required; but the hon. Member may rest assured that I shall spare no pains to prevent misconception and annoyance to the large body of depositors whose interests he advocates.

DEFECTIVE SWORDS.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War whether, in addition to the regiments in Ireland mentioned in the recent Report, the defective swords of pattern 1885 are in the hands of other regiments; and, if so, what regiments; whether they have all, or any of them, been tested, as were those of the regiments stationed in Ireland; and who assisted the Inspector of Small Arms when inspecting the swords of the latter regiments?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I think that I informed my hon. Friend in June, 1887, in reply to a question which he then put to me, that all cavalry regiments other than those in India have swords of the pattern known as that of 1885. Up to the present time, the swords of six regiments have been inspected since issue, and the remainder will be examined as soon as possible. The Chief Inspector of Small Arms was assisted in his work by qualified men employed in his Department.

DR. TANNER: How comes it to pass that the War Office are so anxious about the swords in Ireland being specially examined?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Defects were reported in one regiment, and then the others were examined.

ALLEGED OBSTRUCTION TO THE POLICE.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the cases of seamen who were recently sentenced by the resident magistrates at Ballaghaderrin, county Mayo, Petty Sessions, to imprisonment for a month and a day for alleged obstruction of the police in the discharge of their duty at Lissacal, county Roscommon, and who served formal notices of appeal to the next quarter sessions for the division, which take place at Athlone on the 22nd instant, can be tried at a more convenient place than Athlone, which is at the opposite end of the county to that in which the defendants reside, being nearly 50 miles distant; whether he was aware that there will also be Quarter Sessions at Castlerea on the 29th March for the same division of the county, which is only seven miles from the defendants; and whether, in view of the fact that the defendants are too poor to defray the expense of travelling to and attending at Athlone, he would consent to a postponement of the cases from Athlone to Castlerea Quarter Sessions on the 29th instant?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am unable to answer the Question on account of insufficient notice.

MR. HAYDEN: As the Quarter Sessions meet on Friday, will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiry?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Inquiry has been made already, but I have not received information that would enable me to answer the question.

DINUZULU.

MR. WALTER M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he was aware that it is impossible to set down the appeal against the validity of the warrant on behalf of Dinuzulu, for which leave has been obtained, until the record has been sent by the Natal Registrar direct to the Registrar of the Privy Council; whether the Order in Council granting leave to appeal was sent out to Natal by Messrs. Loughborough and Gedge, solicitors or agents in the case, on the day they received it, a month ago, and whether everything has been done on their part, and on the part of Dinuzulu's friends, to push on the appeal; and, whether, in these circumstances, the Government intend to take advantage of this technicality and allow the trial to take place, or whether they will rather give time for the appeal to be heard?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The reply to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative; and as regards the second paragraph, the Secretary of State has no information. In answer to the last paragraph, I may say that this is not a matter of technicality, as the result of the appeal in no way affects the competency of the Commission to try the case. I can only refer the hon. Member to the answers which I have already given in the House to himself and other hon. Members, especially to that which I gave him on the 8th inst.

WORKING HOURS IN THE GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he would consider the possibility of re-arranging the working hours at the dockyards, so as to enable the men to leave work at 5 p.m during the summer months?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): This question is under consideration; but at present there is no intention of causing work to cease in the summer before 5.30 p.m. Such an arrangement would be detrimental to the wage-earning power of the men, especially if the system of task-work be extended.

RAID ON A WORKMAN'S CLUB.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanarkshire, N.W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has now any information to lay before the House as to the alleged raid on a workman's club by the police on

Saturday, after a parade of Jewish unemployed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there was no raid whatever, but the police were themselves assaulted, and a case is now pending before a magistrate. Until the facts are ascertained at the trial, it would obviously be improper that I should make any further statement on the subject.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) in rising to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department the name of any visitor admitted to see the prisoner John Daly at Chatham Prison since the passing of the Special Commission Act, 1888; the reason for the visit; whether it took place without the presence of warders; and, in what manner and on what grounds the permission to visit was granted, said, that he had received a letter from the Home Secretary desiring him to postpone the question until he obtained details. Might he ask whether the information was not at the Home Office?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have no information at the Home Office. I have asked for the details.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman cannot obtain the information from the Prison Commissioners, and whether the Prison Commissioners are not under the same roof as the right hon. Gentleman?

MR. MATTHEWS: The question put to me asks information as to whether the interview took place in the presence of warders. Information on such facts could only be ascertained through the Governor.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman give the names of any person or persons admitted to see the dynamitard, John Daly, since the Special Commission Act was passed?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have not the materials with me to enable me to answer that question accurately, and I told the hon. Gentleman that if he postponed his question, I could give him a full and not a partial answer.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then I shall put the question in another form. Was Mr. Richard Pigott allowed to see John Daly in prison?

MR. MATTHEWS: Mr. Richard Pigott did—I am speaking from memory, I am not quite sure I am correct—in the month of December last visit John Daly in Chatham Prison at the prisoner's own request. The visit was a private visit under the prison rules.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I shall put a further question on this subject.

DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONERS.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the newly named Divisional Commissioners had their appointments as Resident Magistrates cancelled by the Lord Lieuteant: whether, thereupon, they were immediately re-created magistrates for their various counties by the Lord Chancellor; if so, will they be obliged to confine their functions to certain Petty Sessions districts, as was ruled in the case of Mr. James Byrne, of Mallow; and, what Petty Sessions districts have they selected to act for?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the case that the Divisional Commissioners are to have their appointments as Resident Magistrates cancelled; also that I am advised that they will be appointed by the Lord Chancellor to the Commission of the Peace for the particular counties comprised in their respective divisions. They will not adjudicate in any Petty Sessions district, their duties having been all along purely executive.

DR. TANNER: Is it the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill dealing with this question?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Speaking without notice of the question, my impression is that a Bill will not be necessary for the purpose of the proposed change.

DR. TANNER: Are Her Majesty's Government going to keep their word?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

CAPTAIN SEGRAVE.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies whether facilities will be afforded at the Government Offices for Cape Colony to search the columns of the *Cape Gazette*, with the object of ascertaining why Mr.

O'Neil Segrave was obliged to retire from the Cape Mounted Infantry?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The notification in the *Cape Gazette* is as follows:—

> "Colonial Secretary's Office,
> Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope,
> July 20, 1885.
>
> His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been pleased to approve the following alteration in the Cape Infantry Regiment:—
>
> 'The services of Lieutenant O'Neil Segrave are dispensed with. Dated the 16th of July, 1885.'
>
> JOHN TUDHOPE, Colonial Secretary."

I shall be happy to give the hon. Member the facilities he desires for seeing the *Cape Gazette*, should he still wish to do so. No answer has as yet been received from the Cape in reply to the telegraphic inquiry as to the cause of Mr. Segrave's dismissal. If the hon. Member will put a further question on Thursday, I will give him the information, should I have then received it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I have to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether Captain Segrave's salary will be upon the Vote on Account, and whether that Vote on Account will be taken without any reasons being given with reference to the matter on which the interrogation has been made?

BARON H. DE WORMS: It will not be upon the Colonial Estimates.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will it be on the Vote on Account of the Irish Estimates?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Segrave is still a Resident Magistrate in Ireland, and will remain a Resident Magistrate until there is some evidence to show that he ought to be dismissed, and, he being a Resident Magistrate, I presume his salary will be provided in the Vote.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask whether the Agent General of the Cape Colony, in sending a copy of the *Official Gazette*, has not stated that Lieutenant Segrave's services would not have been dispensed with unless he had been guilty of some grave offence; and whether under these circumstances Captain Segrave will be continued as a Resident Magistrate?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I really am amazed at the principles of justice which appear to animate hon. Gentlemen opposite. I have done my best to get full information regarding Mr. Segrave's career in South Africa, and if there has been any delay due to any office in this country, that is not at the door of the Irish Office, but at the door of the Colonial Office, and I hope it will be on the head of my right hon. Friend near me that all the vials of the wrath of the hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway will be poured in regard to this matter. If hon. Gentlemen think that I, as responsible for the Irish Government, am going to dismiss any servant of the Irish Government until full particulars have been obtained with regard to the offence of which he is accused, they are entirely mistaken.

SIR W. HARCOURT: May I ask whether all these circumstances were not brought under the notice of the right hon. Gentleman on December 19 last; and when he seeks to evade responsibility, when he disclaims responsibility, for the Irish Office, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, after the lapse of three months, he is not at present in possession of that information which has been asked for?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I made a request to the Colonial Secretary for information, and I have not got it. The right hon. Gentleman knows that I have no direct means of communicating with the Cape Government. Any further question on the subject should be addressed to my right hon. Friend.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then I will ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies why, if he was requested three months ago to inquire into this matter, he has not done so?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The only answer is that the request was made to the Cape Government. [*Cries of* "When?"]

BARON H. DE WORMS: At the time, and repeated since by telegraph. It was repeated again to-day.

DR. TANNER: If a question is sent by telegraph, why cannot an answer be received by wire?

BARON H. DE WORMS: An answer might be received by telegraph if it had been sent.

IRELAND—THE BARROW DRAINAGE SCHEME.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County): I begto ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of the resolution passed by the Queen's County Grand Jury at Maryborough, in which they expressly endorse the resolutions adopted by the public meeting previously held at Portarlington, which resolutions condemned the Government scheme for the drainage of the Barrow by means of embankments, and advocated the scheme recommended by Lord Castletown's Commission; and, whether, in face of this second expression of opinion from the locality interested, he intends to adhere to the scheme embodied in his Bill of last year?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As at present advised I do not propose to alter the scheme.

MR. WILSON AND THE IRISH POLICE.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe Division): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the hon. Member for the Holmfirth Division, whilst taking a walk with Mrs. Wilson in the neighbourhood of the Gweedore Hotel, on Saturday 16th instant, was persistently followed about by two armed constables; whether, when the hon. Member shortly after took a car for a drive with Mrs. Wilson, three armed constables mounted another car and persistently followed them for some time; and, what was the object of this police supervision?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: This is one of the questions with regard to which I have not yet received information.

BALLYCOTTON PIER.

Mr. LANE (Cork County, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state approximately the cost of carrying out the alterations recommended by Mr. Wolfe Barry on Ballycotton Pier; and, what has been the cost of the other repairs and alterations executed on this pier by the Board of Works since their engineer certified in 1888 that the pier was "a perfectly sound and stable marine work"? [Tuesday, 19th March.]

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): Until a detailed and complete specification of the works recommended by Mr. Barry has been made it will not be possible to frame any estimate for their probable cost. It has not been necessary to expend any money, and no money has been expended on the pier since its transfer to the Grand Jury in 1888. The Board of Works hold that it was, and is, a perfectly sound and stable marine work, having stood the most severe storm without showing the slightest failure or weakness. The only expenditure since the transfer to the Grand Jury has been for the removal of some rubble stones from the bed of the harbour (£11 3s. 5d.), and for labour in connection with the examination during Mr. Wolfe Barry's inquiry (£30 11s. 3d.).

Mr. LANE: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is a fact that the Report which was submitted to this House has not yet been issued to Members, and whether there is not ground for the rumour that this Report has been sent back during the course of printing to the Irish Office for revision?

Mr. JACKSON: I am not quite sure whether I am sorry or glad that the hon. Gentleman has put the question, because really it contains an imputation upon the Board of Works and the Treasury, which I think it is extremely desirable to remove. I told the hon. Member, when I laid the Report upon the Table of the House, that it was that day sent to the printers, and it has not, therefore, been sent back to the Board of Works, and the delay in issuing it rests entirely with the printer, and not with the Department.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether anything is being done to prevent the delays of the printer, of which constant complaints are being made?

Mr. JACKSON: As one who knows something of the difficulties with which the printer has to contend at this season of the year, I feel it my duty to stand up in his defence, and say it is almost impossible for him to get through the work which falls upon him this fortnight. The House decided that this work should be let by contract to one printer, and the whole of the printing for the Estimates of the Army, the Navy, and the Civil Service, and the whole of the other papers in the course of distribution to Members, has to be done by this one firm, and for about a fortnight it is not too much to say that the men are almost worked beyond their power of endurance. I say this because I believe they have done the very best they can.

GAMBLING AT TATTERSALL'S.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Home Secretary whether his attention has been drawn to the following remarks of Mr. Justice Manisty, as reported in the *Times* of March 12, on the subject of gambling—

> "He did not hesitate to say, from his experience as a Judge, that there was no greater evil in society, and none which caused more misery and ruin in families. . . . He could not see why, when petty betting houses were put down by force, Tattersall's should be spared, though the bets made there were no more valid or legal than if made in any public house;"

and whether the Government are prepared to give effect to the recommendation therein made?

Mr. MATTHEWS: My attention has been called to the remarks of Mr Justice Manisty. The subject of gambling has been frequently under the consideration of the Legislature, and was finally dealt with by 16 and 17 Vic., c. 119, the Statute to which, I presume, the learned Judge alludes. The question whether the establishment at Tattersall's falls within the provisions of that Statute is one which, so far as I know, has never yet been raised, and which appears to admit of some doubt. It is open to anyone interested in the matter to raise it. The Government are not of opinion that further legislation on the subject is necessary, or that the public interests call for any special interference on their part.

THE RISLEY SCHOOL FOUNDATION.

Sir W. FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith whether the Charity Commissioners have it in contemplation to hold a public inquiry at Risley in connection with the draft scheme recently issued for Risley Schools; and, if so, whether the inquiry will be held at some hour in the evening, so as to give the industrial classes a full opportunity of stating their views on the scheme?

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER: On the 8th of this month the Charity Commissioners directed that a public inquiry should be held (under the provisions of sections 35 and 50 of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869) concerning the draft scheme which has been published for the Risley School foundation; and they have already instructed the Assistant Commissioners, to whom the duty of holding this inquiry is committed, to arrange for an evening sitting for the convenience of the working classes.

LABOUR IN INDIAN FACTORIES.

Mr. J. MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether any reply has yet been received from the Government of India to the inquiries of the Secretary of State as to the expediency of amending the law for the regulation of labour in Indian factories?

Sir J. GORST: Yes, Sir; the Secretary of State has been informed by telegraph that the Government of India's report on the Factory Act was despatched by the mail of the 8th of March.

THE LONGRIDGE GUN.

Mr. GERALD BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether it is the case that a Longridge gun, differing in no material respect from the original design of the inventor, was made at the Abouchoff Works, in Russia; that this gun fired 1,000 rounds of battering charges; that it was then taken to pieces, the wire being unwound and re-wound on a new A tube replaced in the original jacket, and was at this moment in the course of firing a second set of 1,000 rounds, of which 500 had already been fired; that the gun was made in about half the time of an ordinary built-up gun, and cost two-thirds of the money; and that the most detailed information respecting it is in the possession of the Director of Artillery; and whether, if this be so, he is prepared to cause fresh experiments to be made, with a view of testing the merits of the Longridge gun?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): Detailed reports on this gun have been received only within the last few days, and have been remitted to the Ordnance Committee for report. We must await that Report before coming to any further decision.

AFFAIRS AT TANGIER.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Division): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a Reuter's telegram, dated Tangier, March 16th, to the effect that the Moorish Minister for Foreign Affairs had sent a messenger to the Sultan's Court to inform His Majesty that the British Channel Squadron had come to Tangier to support the demands of the British Minister with regard to the cable and other claims, and that it was reported that the squadron would not leave until the Sultan's answer was received; and whether it is true that a British Squadron had gone to Tangier to support demands of the British Minister; and, if so, what demands?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Some ships of the Channel Squadron have gone to Tangier. There are certain serious questions unsettled between the Shereefian Government and that of Her Majesty, especially the treacherous murder at Cape Juby of a British subject by some of the Sultan's soldiers, as well as the prohibition to allow the submarine cable to be repaired. I cannot enter into these questions further, as they are still under discussion between the two Governments.

THE IRISH POLICE AND THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state what grounds Sergeant Kelly had for the belief that a meeting of the Fermoy branch of the Irish National League was about being held on the occasion when he (with several other policemen) intruded on the premises of the Fermoy Young Ireland Society, and remained there despite the protests of the officers and members of that Society; and, whether this action on the part of Sergeant Kelly was in accordance with the instructions issued to the Constabulary?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It would be manifestly inconvenient and likely to defeat the ends of justice, to state the ground or the sort of information on which the police act in taking steps in cases where a breach of the law is anticipated. It is the duty of the police to take all such lawful steps as the circumstances of each case may require.

MOTIONS.

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Motion on the Paper in the name of the First Lord of the Treasury as to financial business, I should like to point out that it contains five distinct propositions, and I wish to know whether, in accordance with the practice of the House, the Motion ought not to have been in paragraph form and each proposition put separately from the Chair?

*Mr. SPEAKER: It is one proposition. I do not see anything unusual or improper in the Motion as it stands.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I understand that, as in the case of the Rules of Procedure, the Rules of the House may be discussed and voted upon each paragraph separately.

*Mr. SPEAKER: That would be contrary to the statement I have just made. Of course, Amendments may be moved, but I shall put the Motion as one.

Sir W. HARCOURT: May I ask whether it is not the fact that each of the Rules of Procedure was dealt with and divided upon separately?

*Mr. SPEAKER: My observation did not apply to the whole of the Rules, but to each individual Rule which contained several propositions.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I submit, Sir, that the First Lord of the Treasury ought not to be allowed to put the House into a difficulty. A Member may not take the same view of one part of a Motion that he does of another part.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think any difficulty will arise. Any hon. Member can move to omit any portion of the Motion.

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I have now to move—

"That until the proceedings on the Supplementary Estimates, 1888-89, the Excesses, 1887-88, and the Vote on Account for 1889-90 in the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and on Report therefrom, and the several stages of the Consolidated Fund Bill, are concluded, the proceeding thereon shall have precedence of other Orders of the Day and Notices of Motion on every day for which they are appointed. The provisions of Standing Order No. 56 shall be extended to any day on which the said Votes are set down. Such financial business may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5. But after such proceedings are disposed of no opposed business shall be taken."

I regret that I am under the necessity of moving this Motion, but, as I have already stated, it is imperative upon the Government to make provision for the services of the country. By introducing the Consolidated Fund Bill to-day we shall be able to insert in it on Thursday the provision as to the Vote on Account. This is not a Motion brought forward for the convenience of the Government, but in the interests of the service of the country, and whether hon. Members approve the course which I now suggest or not, it is but right that we should make provision for the service of the country. That provision cannot be regularly and adequately made unless we take the Vote on Account on Thursday next. The business on the Paper for this Evening Sitting will, of course, be superseded if my Motion is agreed to. But I may say with regard to the first Motion, which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) and which deals with mining royalties, that the Government have considered it, and, although they are not prepared to accept it in the terms laid down by the hon. Member, they are prepared to accept it in substance. As to the second Motion, which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Woolwich (Colonel Hughes), we are of opinion that upon the whole the hon. Gentleman is right in asking for a judicial inquiry into the circumstances under which workmen entered in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and other Government establishments between December 17, 1861, and June 4, 1870, have been hitherto refused the benefits of the Superannuation Acts. The third Motion on this evening's paper is that of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir G. Trevelyan), but I think it will be generally admitted that in the ordinary course of things it could not have been reached before 1 o'clock in the morning. I regret that it is not in my power to afford the same terms of conciliation to hon. Gentlemen who have Bills on the paper for to-morrow; but I venture to say to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) that he has hitherto been so successful in obtaining days for the discussion of matters in which he is interested that I think in this instance he may well submit to the necessity which is imposed upon us. In the event of Supply not being concluded to-morrow we propose to conclude it on Thursday. The Financial Bill will be read a first time to-day. It will then receive a second reading, and in Committee we propose to introduce as an Amendment a provision for the Vote on Account and such Votes as may be taken to-night and to-morrow, so as to report the Bill in the House on Monday next. We shall then be able to read the Bill a third time on Tuesday, and that is the latest day on which it will be possible to comply with the financial regulations of the country. Under these circumstances, I trust the House will accept this Motion and proceed with the discussion of the Estimates, having due regard to their proportional interest to the country and apportioning time accordingly.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That until the Proceedings on the Supplementary Estimates 1888-9, the Excesses 1887-8, and the Vote on Account for 1889-90 in the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and on Report therefrom, and the several stages of the Consolidated Fund Bill, are concluded, the Proceedings thereon shall have precedence of other Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which they are appointed. The provisions of Standing Order No. 56 shall be extended to any day on which the said Votes are set down. Such Financial Business may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5. But after such Proceedings are disposed of no opposed Business shall be taken."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): If a soft speech could turn away wrath, I quite admit that the right hon. Gentleman has made his proposal in as soft and kindly a fashion as it was possible to do it; and so far as my hon. Friend the Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt) is concerned—he, no doubt, will presently express his view—it does seem to me to go a long way to disarm opposition, so far as the very important Motion standing for this evening is concerned. The right hon. Gentleman says the question submitted to the House is not for the Government, but for the country; but he forgets the country has no opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it. I think I might answer, at any rate, for the Members who sit around me, that if we thought the First Lord was going to give an opportunity to the country, if—after providing the financial means of government for the moment—he intended to give the country an opportunity of generally expressing a verdict, partially expressed at Kennington the other day, I think I might then promise him we would withdraw all opposition to his Motion. He was good enough to say, in equally kindly fashion, some words as to my good fortune in the ballot. If he would undertake to give my Bill, which stands first for tomorrow, that precedence on some other day it obtained by good fortune in the ballot, but which it now loses entirely, then I could understand the applicability of his address personally to myself. But the effect of the Motion is to take away the time from private Members. On every conceivable pretence the rights of private Members and the House are constantly being taken away. I deny that the present Government has any right to ask the House for the indulgence it now seeks. What is the case presented by the First Lord? The case is that by law they are now in a position in which—unless they take away the rights of private Members—they cannot comply with the law as a Government should. But they knew that before they fixed the date for the assembling of Parliament. It is the duty of a Government not to speculate on private Members' time, but, having the whole authority at their own disposal, make such reasonable appropriation of the time as shall prevent that necessity. What is the effect of a Motion like this upon Members who have balloted for Bills? Under the new Rule, no Member having charge of a private Bill has the slightest prospect of having that Bill passed into law, unless on the first day of the ballot he is able to fix a date so that the Second Reading can be taken before Whitsuntide. So the practical effect, when the Government takes the whole time in this fashion, is to postpone the consideration of the legislative proposals submitted by private Members until next Session. If it were a Motion for which I could ballot night after night, the uncertainties or chances of the ballot might modify the rigour of the right hon. Gentleman's Motion; but I have no chance of a ballot again for position for my Bill. I can only do it on the first night of the Session; and if No. 1 is to be killed by the Government in this way, what becomes of No. 2, No. 3, and the others? If the first number has no chance of being submitted to the judgment of the House, then the ballot, so far as private Members are concerned, becomes an entire sham, and should be so understood outside. Not only were the Government late in assembling Parliament—and I am quite ready to admit that hired men have a good excuse for being late in resuming work; but that is no excuse for a Government charged with the administration of the country—but, moreover, it arose from the bad management of Government time last Session. We should not have sat until Christmas Eve if the Government had not wanted to appoint new officials with new salaries, and, after having wasted on their project twelve nights of their time, abandoned their Bill. These twelve nights might have been devoted to Supply, and might have saved the necessity of any adjourned Sitting at all. We agree that, with his onerous duties as Leader of the House, the First Lord may well be anxious for a prolonged rest, but he has no claim upon our indulgence on that account. He stands before the House as having wilfully selected a date for the meeting of Parliament which, with no good fortune, would leave him any spare time but what he might obtain by taking away from private Members a right they have had for generations, and which has been attended with great advantage to the country on the whole; though sometimes, perhaps, time may have been wasted. I stated yesterday my especial reasons for opposing this Motion, and, on a matter of fact, I found myself in conflict with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If he will permit me to say so, that conflict of fact is not one on which he is in a position to express judgment, for I was here and he was not. What happened on Thursday? To show there was no despotism on our part to aggravate the difficulties of the Government, it is enough to remind the House that when the Secretary of State for War made an appeal to us not to prevent him getting at once into Committee, many of us —I myself had a great question to raise —refrained from raising questions, and you soon left the Chair. Consequently we shall not be able to raise those questions we desire to raise until particular Votes are taken in Committee. Perhaps next Christmas we shall be told, as we were last Christmas, that it is too late; that everybody wants to get away; and we shall be asked not to occupy time then, seeing that we shall have an opportunity of doing so "at an early day next Session when Estimates are again brought in." Sir, it is a question for the country. It is a question for the country when private Members' grievances shall be considered. Grievances used to come before Supply in the old time, but now, it appears, Supply is to come first, to come always, and to come clumsily. Last year we had six Votes on Account; indeed, I am not sure whether there were not more—they came so often, that one hesitates to trust one's memory. Now we are beginning the same thing, and private Members' rights are to be sacrificed. On Thursday we followed the course pursued when we allowed the Secretary for War to get into Committee without opposition, and what happened? The Opposition allowed the Supplementary Naval Estimate to be taken without a word of challenge, because we wanted to spare the Government any annoyance. There was good matter for debate, £800,000 gone to the bottom of the sea, and an item relating to this state being on the Estimate. I had myself voluminous notes, and I thought the matter might be raised, and if I had had an idea that this Thuggism was to be applied to our rights I should not have hesitated to raise it. We allowed the Vote to be taken without challenge at all. There was an eloquent and useful word or two from naval supporters of the Government, but not a word of criticism to delay the Vote. The Vote for men also passed and the Vote for money might have been taken at ten minutes past 8 on Thursday, without challenge or dispute. There was no one here to dispute it, except myself and a few other Members, well-intentioned towards the Government I am sorry to say. I repeat it now. Four Members on the Government side rose, and made interesting speeches, and my view frankly was that the Government were in no haste to get this Vote taken, but they rather wanted to delay it until late in the evening, so that they might say blame rested on the Opposition. Why did they not take the Vote when they could have taken it? It is utterly futile to say they could not have prevented their followers from speaking with the more than willing—the devout obedience they yield to the First Lord. They knew how pressed he was for time; they knew he was in a corner; and one sign through the ordinary Government channels of communication would have stopped them, and, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in the North, have made them "stifled Ciceros" for the time. I ask the Government whether it is fair to take any, and in a fashion that is not reparable, not simply the places of Members who have Motions on the paper, but to destroy their opportunities which by the only possible ballot of the Session were secured for submitting legislative proposals to the House and country? I do not pretend to deal as I would elsewhere with the real grounds why the right hon. Gentleman should not have the assent of the House to his Motion. I quite agree, if the Government had the general sympathy of the House, not only of their own devoted supporters—I quite agree, if they had the general sympathy of the country with them, this great concession should be made to enable them to carry on the Government with facility; but because I believe they have not got that sympathy outside, and because I am sure they have done everything possible to alleviate those sympathies inside among Members on this side, I intend not only to protest as I do now, but to divide the House against this effort so early in the Session to utterly destroy the only opportunity of independent Members to obtain a judgment on their proposals.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): The First Lord has founded his demand for this Resolution upon the imperative necessity of passing within the financial year what is called the Consolidated Fund Bill, one of those temporary Appropriation Bills passed by Parliament with reference to Votes in Supply on particular dates. As I understand the right hon. Gentleman, he says it is necessary that all the Votes in Supply should be put into this Bill; that the Bill will not operate unless these Votes in Supply and the Vote on Account in particular are passed. Now, I venture to challenge that statement. I speak in the presence of those who have had greater experience than I have had, and I say it is not the practice of the Treasury; that it is not the rule of Parliament—it is a new practice introduced, I will not say surreptitiously, but with very little explanation endeavoured to be introduced by the Government for the first time, in order to force on the Vote on Account, and so prevent our having adequate time to discuss it. That is my reading of this transaction. On the other hand, I say that if the Consolidated Fund Bill is passed at any time it will cover the Vote on Account, although that Vote on Account be agreed to subsequent to the passing of the Bill, so long as the Vote on Account be taken before the last day of the financial year. I ask whether that has not been the previous practice of the House, and whether it is not the rule of Parliament? The Government are attempting to alter this rule; and why? Because they shrink from the discussion of the Vote on Account. We claim every day that can be given to the Vote on Account, and I will say why; but first I will bring the Government to book on this practice of Parliament and of the Treasury. I will take their own Consolidated Fund Bill of 1888; the Act, in its second clause, states that Her Majesty's Treasury may pay out all moneys which had been voted to make good the Supplies granted for the service of the year ending on the 31st of March, 1889. They may consequently, under the authority of that Act, for any purpose voted by Parliament before March 31st, 1889, pay out whatever money is voted up to that date. This is not merely an interpretation of the law, but it has been the practice of the Treasury up to this time. Is the Consolidated Fund Bill to be in the same terms this year as it was last year? If it is in the same terms, you may pay money voted on account down to the 31st of March. If it is going to be in different terms, then the question arises—Why is a change going to be made? This pressing on the Vote on Account is a new and surreptitious form of the closure. We are surrounded by closure at every step. Every means is taken in one way or another to prevent the public discussion of the conduct of the Government. If these devices are allowed to be operative, the time will soon come when the House of Commons will not be a place for discussion at all. I know, if you had your will, that would be the case. The House would become a mere vestry to register the transactions of the Government; this is what you are fast turning it into by your methods of procedure; but it does not signify so much to us; if you will not let us discuss your conduct here, there are other places where we can do so. As an old Parliamentarian I would much rather discuss your conduct in your presence in this House; but, if this is not what you wish, we must discuss it in your absence and elsewhere, unless you are going to prolaim meetings in this country. It will be discussed, for I trust we shall still have the right of public meeting that is not permitted in Ireland. I say there is no financial necessity, and there is no legal necessity, for your passing this Bill in haste if you introduce it in the same language in which you did last year. This will be according to previous practice at the Treasury, and there is no reason why the Vote on Account should close before March 31.

MR. JACKSON: There is the Report.

SIR W. HARCOURT: And the Report. That, as I understand, has been the established practice. We hear some whisper of some higher authority behind the Treasury which insists on the new practice, but I know of no authority which has the right to control the practice of Parliament and the Treasury, or at all events, let us hear the claim and we will examine it. We stand on the established practice of Parliament and the Treasury, and we claim distinctly to keep open the Vote on Account to March 31. We are told Supply occupies too much time as compared with former days, but there never was a Government behaved as this Government has behaved. We have had a little experience of the conduct of administration. We saw yesterday how the Chief Secretary for Ireland treats the Home Office, and we have seen to-day how the Colonial Office treats the Irish Office. Such confusion and maladministration was never exhibited before. We are getting at the truth bit by bit, but it is very hard to get at; it requires a surgical operation to be practised by Members on this side; but by degrees we are getting it out, and we see how every department of the Service has been prostituted. [" Oh, oh!" *and cries of* "Withdraw!"] I shall not withdraw; I have the right to challenge the conduct of the Government in these matters; I mean to do so in Committee of Supply. I shall challenge it with reference to Mr. Anderson, with reference to the prison doctor, with reference to the Irish Constabulary, and with reference to the Resident Magistrates. It is said they have taken all these men, paid by public money, and placed them at the service of the *Times* newspaper; and I shall not spare them. When we are asked for £10,000 for the Attorney General, I shall ask what services he has rendered to the State in the course of the last nine months? These are proper questions for Committee of Supply; and it is in Committee of Supply that the conduct of the Executive Government is to be examined. Therefore, I will resist by every means in my power attempts to shove Committee of Supply into a corner, to use the closure on Committee of Supply, and to silence the Opposition upon the Vote on Account, on a pretext which I believe to have no foundation in law or in the financial practice of the country. Therefore, so far as this Motion is concerned, so far as it claims to shut our mouths on Thursday on the Vote on Account, I say there is no precedent or necessity for it if only the Government will introduce their Financial Bill in the same terms as that of last year, which was passed on March 27. We are entitled to examine the conduct of the Government as in my opinion it requires to be examined.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I join my hon. Friend in his protest against the proposition of the First Lord, on behalf of private Members, though at the same time, so far as I myself am concerned with my Motion on the Paper for this evening, I feel I have no reason to complain. I understand the right hon. Gentleman has substantially accepted my Motion, so I have no intention to continue the debate. I should not have stood between the House and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were it not that I am anxious to give him an opportunity of answering two questions. I have to ask when the Government will be able to place upon the Paper the exact terms of their proposal in reference to Mining Royalties, and also whether the Royal Commission it is proposed to appoint will include in its inquiry mines under the Crown and Mines Royal? I join emphatically in the protest against further enroachments on the rights of private Members.

***The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER** (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I cannot give an absolute answer to the question of the hon. Member; but the Government will in a few days give notice of the exact terms of reference to the Royal Commission. With regard to the more technical part of the speech of the right hon. Member for Derby, I am at a loss to understand what he really means, and I only hope that the difficulty of understanding what he means is not shared by himself and his colleagues. Nothing can be more preposterous than the idea that we should have any sinister object in view in wishing to pass the Vote on Account and to embody it in the Ways and Means Bill. There is only a single occasion, of which the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian will be well aware, on which the Vote on Account has been passed so near the close of the financial year. That was in the year 1853, and although we have admitted it is not positively illegal, yet it is distinctly a financial irregularity that a Vote on Account should not be included in the Ways and Means Bill. I challenge any hon. Member or right hon. Member opposite to say whether it is not the regular practice that that should be done. Then what did the right hon. Gentleman mean?

Sir W. HARCOURT: What I asked was this: Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer mean to say that the Ways and Means Bill of last year would not legally have covered any Votes for that year although voted after the introduction of the Bill?

***Mr. GOSCHEN**: The right hon. Gentleman asks whether it would not "legally" cover such Votes. I have admitted that "legally" it would; but I contend, on the other hand, that it is against the regular practice of the House, and that there is only one single exception to such regular practice which the right hon. Gentleman can quote. Let the House thoroughly understand that there is no positive law; you may take funds voted in the Ways and Means Bill for the Army and the Navy, and by law apply them to the Civil Service; but it is against every principle of finance that it should be done, especially when the separation is made in the debates of the House between the two, though I know that the sums voted are not ear-marked in the same way as the Votes themselves are ear-marked. It is entirely against the practice of the House and against all financial tradition that such a course should be pursued. Then the right hon. Gentleman says that we are introducing an innovation, and challenges us as if we for some surreptitious cause were anxious to introduce such an innovation. The right hon. Gentleman piles challenge upon challenge, and says, "I am going to ask you this and to ask you that," but what we wish is that those questions should be put, and that we should not lose time night by night before coming to these Votes. We expected to be on this Vote yesterday, and we endeavoured to hasten on business; but then the friends of the right hon. Gentleman opposite would not allow us to do so. Perhaps some of those gentlemen who cry "No" spent a portion of the five hours which were devoted to discussing a Vote of £200. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby appears to approve of speech after speech being made, repeating precisely the same arguments simply in order that a certain number of gentlemen may each figure in the Scotch newspapers.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Division): Is the right hon. Gentleman in order in attributing motives?

*MR. SPEAKER: That entirely depends upon what the motives are.

DR. CAMERON: The right hon. Gentleman said that a number of Scotch Members repeated statements over and over again simply in order that reports of their speeches might appear in the Scotch newspapers.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think that the motive of desiring to have one's speech reported in a newspaper can be said to be a dishonourable one.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member for the College Division is very susceptible as to motives; did he hear the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby charge the Government with every kind of surreptitious motive? He said that he would state what their motive was, and that it was a surreptitious one, and would not be avowed. What we do contend, and will contend against anybody, is this—that we have allowed ample time for all the business of the House. The hon. Member for Northampton said that we should not have called the House together so late, and should not have speculated upon taking the time of private Members. We made a most careful calculation, and we saw that there was ample time, provided that hon. Members would not abuse the opportunity. But has the hon. Member for Northampton counted the number of days so far occupied? Ten days were spent upon the Address, although the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his Friends above the Gangway, I believe, thought themselves that four or five days would be amply sufficient. I know that they have no control over hon. Members below the Gangway; but they must take that into account; and the hon. Member for Northampton will see, if he looks at the way in which business has been conducted, where really lies the waste of time. Take the case of the discussion on the Navy Estimates. There was a Vote of £3,000,000, and it was taken in one night by 12 o'clock. The hon. Member charges hon. Members on this side of the House with having purposely prolonged the debate. A more extravagant proposition I never heard. Was the hon. Member here from 10.30 P.M. till 12, when the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow —to whom I will attribute no motives whatever—spoke three or four times, and the hon. Member for Mid Cork two or three times?

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): May I correct the right hon. Gentleman? I spoke twice—three minutes the first time and four minutes the second. Put that in your pipe.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must confine himself to Parliamentary expressions——

DR. TANNER: Certainly, Sir.

*MR SPEAKER: To expressions not derogatory to the dignity of this Assembly.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The waste of time was simply in order that we might not commence the Supplementary Estimates that night. I trust that I am only replying to the hon. Member for Northampton when I say that a more deliberate—an almost avowed—waste of time than that of Thursday was never witnessed in this House. An hour and a-half was spent simply in order that we might not go to the Supplementary Estimates. I am not sure that this was not deliberately avowed by hon. Members below the Gangway, and then we are told that it is we who are delaying business. We are most anxious to meet the charges which the right hon. Gentleman makes against us. The right hon. Gentleman is very fond of putting a charge in one sentence when he knows that we cannot reply at the time. He has made a number of insinuations, upon each of which we are most anxious to meet him, and to have done with all those insinuations and suggestions, and we wish that he would induce his friends below the Gangway and elsewhere to shorten the proceedings so that we may come to the discussion of these important matters. We have no desire whatever to escape from that discussion, and we shall be able to answer then such suggestions as that we have prostituted the officials of the Civil Service. I should have thought that the right hon. Gentleman, as an ex-Minister, knew that the Civil Service is too high, too honourable, too great, to be prostituted, and that any Government which took such action would find that the instrument would break in its hand But the right hon Gentleman, so long as he can get the cheers of his own friends, so long as he can turn to his allies below the Gangway and ask them to endorse whatever falls from his eloquent lips, is not concerned really to bring these matters to an issue, as we desire. I do not charge the front bench, because they have no control, but I say that if there had not been a preposterous waste of time upon the Supplementary Estimates, which the hon. Member for Bradford himself spoke of as paltry, we should yesterday have been able to begin these more serious questions which the right hon. Gentleman is so anxious to approach, though his desire is not less than ours that we may have an opportunity of meeting them.

*SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The most serious charge that can be brought against a political Party is that of delaying business, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken this opportunity of making that charge across the floor of this House. He rests it upon two cases. I shall name them both, and the House will be able to come to its own conclusion whether or not I have met the cases named by the right hon. Gentleman. The first had reference to the Scotch debate of last night. The right hon. Gentleman says that that debate was unduly prolonged by hon. Members who wished to have their speeches reported in the papers. Now, Scotchmen do not intrude Scotch business frequently in this House, and this was a subject which Scotchmen feel very deeply upon; indeed, I think that since the debate of yesterday Englishmen and Irishmen are beginning to understand why Scotchmen entertained that deep feeling about it. In the first place, the Government, presuming upon the pliability and peaceful disposition of Scotch Members, wished to bring on this debate as late, probably, as 12 o'clock at night. I do not think that that in itself was a proposition calculated to induce Scotch Members to enter on the debate with a feeling that they were going to be fairly treated. The debate came on early yesterday, and it was a case in which no financial or administrative defence whatever was offered for adding a very considerable sum to the Estimates. The Chancellor of the Exchequer got up and flung across the Table a quantity of very highly-spiced attacks upon hon. Members, and especially upon my hon. Friend the Member for the College Division of Glasgow, and before my hon. Friend was able to reply the debate was cut short. The right hon. Gentleman talks of this as a frivolous matter; but he has been a Scotch Member himself, and he should know that Scotch Members look pretty closely into all questions before they vote. What was the character of the Division taken last night? Twenty-seven Scotch Members, including several habitual supporters of the Government, voted against the Ministry, and to the best of my belief there were only eight Scotch Members who voted on the other side, and at least three of those were Members of the Government. I do not think that it is fair that when a debate, on which Scotchmen feel so strongly, is conducted with perfect propriety on the one side, and on the other side, without any attempt to give an argument which can hold water in a financial discussion. I say I do not think it is fair to charge the majority with delaying business. The other case relied on by the right hon. Gentleman may be more shortly disposed of. The Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to the Navy debate on Thursday night. Now, by far the greater part of the evening was taken up with an interesting discussion, but one which, nevertheless, was not of a nature intended to be raised in Committee. Committees are intended to check a too great expenditure, and it was not until the last hour and a-half that Members sitting on this side of the House had an opportunity to come to the real business of the evening, and to discuss and vote whether, or not, the number of men proposed for the Navy was a proper number. I say that when a Vote of three or four millions is proposed, it is not for the Government to say that the Opposition are delaying business, when, after a long and technical discussion, they give only an hour and a-half to the Radical Members to make speeches for the purpose of showing that the proposed increase of 3,000 men, with the necessary additional expenditure of about £100,000, should not be granted.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord George Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): May I point out that, in that hour and a-half, there was not a single proposition of that kind made?

*Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN: I am only adopting the period fixed by the Secretary to the Treasury opposite. My point is that it was not until the end of the evening that that proposition was, for the first time, brought forward, and I say that those hon. Members who objected to this increase in the Vote would have been wanting in their duty if, even at that late hour, they had not brought the matter forward. I consider that I have conclusively proved that, in these two cases, the fault does not lie with the economists, who wish to turn Committee of Supply to its proper use.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Division): As the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to me, it is only due that I should explain precisely how the matter stands, and I shall do so in a very prosaic fashion. On Wednesday evening I asked the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House a question as to the order of business for the following day. I did so because the Scotch Members were particularly interested in one or two Votes proposed to be taken. The right hon. Gentleman told us that he would take the Navy Estimates, and also that he proposed to move a suspension of the 12 o'clock rule, and he went on further to explain that he would not avail himself of that suspension of the rule to proceed, after 12 o'clock, with the Supplementary Estimates. Well, Sir, as a matter of fact, on Thursday's papers, we found the Supplementary Estimates set down after the Navy Estimates, and, in order to make sure, I asked the right hon. Gentleman if they were not so put down merely as a matter of form, and if he intended to adhere to his engagement of the previous evening. He replied that if he had an opportunity of bringing on the Supplementary Estimates after the Navy Estimates, he would do so. I then put the question to him—

> "Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake that, if the Supplementary Estimates are got on with, advantage will not be taken of the suspension of the 12 o'clock rule to carry on the discussion till the early hours of the morning, and get rid of a couple of inconvenient votes which come up on those Estimates?"

The right hon. Gentleman would not undertake that, if these important Scotch questions came on at five minutes to twelve, he would not press the discussion to a close, or enforce the Closure. I told the right hon. Gentleman that he would facilitate business if he would do so, but he declined. I wanted to ventilate the Samoan Question, and I thought that that was a legitimate subject to raise on the Navy Vote. I should have spoken longer on it than I did if the right hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees had not failed to see that the bearing of my intended observations on International Law was relevant to the Vote in question, and I was, therefore, obliged to be shorter than I had intended to be. The right hon. Gentleman says that I spoke more than once. Well, I was obliged to do so, because the First Lord of the Admiralty would give me no answer whatever to my perfectly legitimate question on this most important subject. Altogether, I think I spoke but a very short time, but if it is any satisfaction to the right hon. Gentleman I may inform him that about half-past ten, I, through the ordinary channels of communication, communicated to the representative of the Government, that if they agreed not to take advantage of the suspension of the 12 o'clock rule and hustle through very contentious Scotch Votes, I would use my influence with hon. Members below the Gangway to prevent any discussion being carried on on the Naval Vote. I got no reply, and, that being so, I was determined that these Votes should not be taken after 12 o'clock, and by the Closure disposed of at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. I had no wish to see the discussion of them utterly burked by being brought on at an untimely and unseemly hour in the morning. The whole speech of the right hon. Gentleman has been marked by his characteristic exaggeration. He spoke of five hours being wasted. Now, he is an arithmetician, and he is the head of the arithmetical Department of the Government. How does he make his figures up? I only make out that three and a half hours were spent in the discussion.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: And an hour and a half spent in discussing another subject, makes five hours.

Dr. CAMERON: There was not another hour and a half so spent. The right hon. Gentleman talks as if we had wasted the time of the House. He made, on that occasion, a most bitter and uncalled-for attack on myself, totally outside the question before the House. I was prepared to answer, and shall take an early opportunity of answering him before the Vote passes into law. But what did the Leader of the House do? Before I had an opportunity of answering, and when five or six other Scotch Members were wishing to speak, he moved the Closure and gagged us all. Yet he would have the world believe that we were obstructing. I say it is the Government who are obstructing, particularly in this case. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the debate being upon a paltry amount of £200, but with us, it was not the amount, it was a question of principle which was involved. It was a question of guarding the most precious Constitutional liberties of our country in a legitimate manner in a Court of Law, and without Government interference.

Mr. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer must be very well convinced that he has succeeded in bringing about, partly by his own practice, and partly by the necessity it imposes on others, a great prolongation of this debate. The debate arose on a Motion which is in its nature wholly prospective. It has relation to the arrangement of the coming business of the House, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby entirely conformed to the character of the Motion, and spoke strictly with regard to the coming business of the House and the time it would require. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, apparently not finding that field of argument a promising one, went into a quantity of retrospective matter, and charged Gentlemen on this side of the House, and particularly the Scotch Members—whose character in that respect might, I think, have done something to exempt them from such a charge—with wasting the time of the House. That appears to me to have had a very inconvenient effect. The right hon. Gentleman says, "We calculated beforehand the time that would be necessary for Supply, and if it had not been for the excess that has been used by hon. Members in the disposal of that time we should have been much further advanced." But I want to know what right has the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make himself judge by a preliminary examination of the exact amount of time that will be requisite for discussing Votes in Supply? If the right hon. Gentleman assumes that prerogative, he ought to take care that the proceedings of the Government are within the usual lines. But the proceedings of the Government and of the majority in this matter have been altogether beyond the usual lines, and a new method of government and a new method of administering the law under the name of procedure has been established in Ireland; and in England, under what is known as the Parnell Commission, novelties have been introduced which have raised for us the necessity of entering upon a number of the gravest questions in reference to the Vote on Account. I will not discuss with the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there has been a waste of the time of the House or not. I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman, but I will not discuss the matter, because, even if it were true that, as he thinks, there has been a waste of the time of the House, that is no reason why the House should be deprived prospectively of that time which is reasonably necessary for the discussion of the very important questions which are coming before us. Well, Sir, the state of the case is this. It is admitted that the contention of my right hon. Friend near me is strictly according to law—namely, that there is no legal necessity whatever for closing on Thursday evening the debate on the Vote on Account. Now, let that be recollected as having been stated clearly before the House. What has been set up on behalf of the Government I do not exactly understand. It is not a legal necessity; it is something less than a legal necessity; it is something of an official mystery. Some line of practice is to be departed from which it is admitted has been departed from on former occasions [*Cries of* "Once!"]; this is my proposition, and it constitutes the ground on which I shall give my vote, and which appears to me to be totally irresistible. There are questions of the utmost importance, some of them of great delicacy as well as novelty, which have to be discussed on the Vote on Account, and my contention is that all the time necessary for discussing these questions ought to be granted to the House as far as the law will permit. When I say as far the law permits, I mean the time for the purpose of reasonably discussing these questions which ought to be given to us; and I say that there is no ground on which the Government can possibly justify that time being taken away. The right hon. Gentleman opposite may say we have time enough between now and Thursday for discussing these matters. I do not say whether it will be so or not—I cannot tell when we may get to the Vote on Account—but this I will say, plainly, that there are a large number of questions to be raised on the Vote on Account in regard to which the liberty of the House ought in no respect to be interfered with, and that only the law would justify that interference. But I contend that the law does not justify that interference. It is admitted on all hands, and by the right hon. Gentleman, that there is a precedent which he himself has quoted for the very practice that is now contended for, and we say we cannot have a stronger ground than the gravity of the questions and their number and the necessity for debating them; that the law does not restrain our privileges; and that, next to the law, there is nothing so sacred to the House as its privileges in the discussion of Votes of Supply. On this ground we ought to vindicate for ourselves the maintenance of those privileges, and to enter the firmest and most definite, though respectful, protest against every attempt to infringe them.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford): I have been at the trouble to count the propositions contained in this extraordinary Resolution, and I find that there are sixteen expressed and sixteen understood. In my opinion there never was brought before this House a Resolution containing so many vices. It teems with suppression, and what it expresses it expresses in the worst possible manner. I have merely risen for the purpose of protesting against this system of coercion by Resolution, which simply aims at filching away the time of the House before it has had its eyes opened to what is being done. It involves, in the first place, that we shall sit after one o'clock to-night if it be carried; it next involves that we shall sit to-morrow after six o'clock, and that on Thursday night we shall sit after 12 o'clock. In point of fact it invades every principle which the First Lord of the Treasury established by his famous Procedure Rules; and the right hon. Gentleman who got the House in 1887 to carry that series of Resolutions is now obliged to pose as the "heavy father" in strangling his own offspring. There is not a single Rule he has proposed which he has not—sometimes within two or three days—moved to suspend the operation of. He reminds me of the free Cossack Aitchenoff appropriating other people's property without the smallest respect for the law of nations. I appeal to the long experience of many hon. Members of this House with regard to Votes on Account, and I ask what necessity can there be for including in this Resolution such a Vote? Before I sit down I will move to omit the words "Of the Vote on Account for 1889-90," from the Resolution. This House assented to the new Rules on the distinct understanding that we were not to be kept up after 1 o'clock when there was a Morning Sitting, nor after 12 when we met at three; and yet, not having the pressure of legal force on the question which might arise on the Supplementary Estimates, this Vote on Account is lugged in to prevent the House from fully discussing the matters that might arise upon it. We are told by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goschen) that certain Scotch gentlemen make speeches in order that they may be reported in the Scotch newspapers; but if such were their intention yesterday, it will be impossible now, because no Scotch newspapers can report speeches made at one or two in the morning. I admit that the Government have some, claim in consequence of their own neglect of business, to come to the House *in formâ pauperis* and claim indulgence as to Excess Votes and Votes for Supplementary Estimates. They say—"We have mismanaged the business of last year. We compelled the House to sit up to Christmas. We did this by making one Gentleman who was very obnoxious to the House an Under Secretary, and we passed a Bill appointing the Parnell Commission, which no one regrets more than the Government." I admit that they have considerable claim on the indulgence of the majority of the House, but, I ask, why is it that, having kept us here till Christmas last year, we are to lose the whole of our rights and privileges now? Is it not fair and reasonable for private Members to say that when you deprive them of their rights on a Wednesday, they ought at least to be reinstated at a later period in the Session, because they are being deprived of their rights at a time of the year when it is difficult to get them restored. If the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) is prevented from having his Bill discussed to-morrow he certainly ought to have another occasion at a later part of the Session; for, contrary to the usual rule, it is the man who has the first chance this Session who will suffer, while the man who has the last loses nothing. I say the Government are not entitled to impair in any way the privileges of the House. The Irish Members, for a wonder, have not been complained of this Session. That is a refreshing novelty, and when I heard that it was the Scotch Members who were complained of, I almost experienced the feelings of an archangel at finding that we, the Irish representatives, were without blame. But I would say that we intend to reserve ourselves for this Vote on Account, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was justified in charging the Government with sticking up this Vote on Account for the purpose of applying the Closure in advance. I say that the Irish Members are entitled to discuss the Vote on Account. The House has seen the way in which questions put to the Government have been answered of late. It saw yesterday the way in which the question about Dr. Barr was replied to by the Chief Secretary, and, I ask, was there ever such an instance of ingenious disengenuousness? We have also seen the way in which the Home Secretary endeavoured to shuffle out of the admission that Richard Pigott during the last three months obtained access in Chatham Prison to the dynamitard John Daly. I say it is a most unfair thing to stop discussion on these questions, and if the time necessary is not granted to the House, the charge made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby will have been well sustained. Our argument is not met by saying that the interests of the country demand the action proposed by the Government. The First Lord of the Treasury seems to coin with great facility a series of soothing phrases which might be wrapped up in the famous word "Mesopotamia." I do not know whether he has heard of the "electric shiver"—a species of fraud by which a certain secret chamber gives forth a kind of false and fraudulent shiver. The way in which the right hon. Gentleman speakes of disagreeables in this House reminds me of the electric shiver fraud. What we have a right to insist upon—we who have had the law so strained against us, who have had to withstand the whole force of calumny, who have had fraud and forgery levelled against us, together with the passing of a Coercion Bill by means of forged letters — is that we should have our hands untied and our mouths unlocked, and be enabled for once in the course of two or three Sessions to debate these matters freely and fairly, and at a reasonable time of day. The House having had the assurance that there would be nothing illegal in taking the Vote on Account later on, I will now move the omission of one of the sixteen propositions contained in this Resolution—namely, that affecting the Vote on Account. I move, therefore, to omit the words "and the Vote on Account for 1889-90."

Amendment proposed, in line 2, to leave out the words "and the Vote on Account for 1889-90."—(*Mr. T. M. Healy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I regret I cannot accept the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member. If I were to do so there would only remain one night for the discussion of the Vote on Account. This would really mean precluding the House from discussing the matter, seeing how near is the end of the financial year. Under these circumstances I must ask the House to take such steps as may be necessary to give legal effect to any Vote which may be passed by this House before the end of the financial year. I have stated what I believe to be my duty to the House and the country. [*Opposition Laughter.*] It may be a laughing matter to hon. Members opposite, but I have stated what I believe to be my duty to the House and the country. I desire to afford every opportunity of challenging the conduct of the Government, and we are perfectly prepared to afford right hon. and hon. Members opposite every conceivable opportunity for that purpose, and, under these circumstances, I trust the House will accept the Vote as it stands.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not quite understand whether the right hon. Gentleman withdraws the proposal to close the debate on the Vote on Account next Thursday.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have stated that in my judgment the debate on the Vote on Account ought to be concluded on Thursday, and I have given the reasons for which I think it ought to be so concluded. It is for the House to decide whether it will accept those reasons or not.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to closure us on Thursday night, there being no legal necessity for our being closured? The right hon. Gentleman says it will be for the House to decide. We know what he means by that.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think I may fairly claim that whenever good ground has been shown or urged for the continuance of a debate I have never sought to prevent its continuance. I desire, as far as I possibly can, to conduct the business in accordance with the sentiment of what is thought right and proper to be done not only on these Benches, but on the Benches opposite.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I will not enter into a controversy on that matter with the right hon. Gentleman, for whom, I beg to assure him, I have the most sincere respect, and whose invariable courtesy I desire to acknowledge; but he has said that he never has used, and never will use, his Parliamentary majority for this purpose if he thinks a good cause is alleged against it. What I ask is whether he thinks we have alleged a good cause. If he gives us an assurance that he is not going to closure us on the Vote on Account on Thursday next, so as to preclude us from challenging the conduct of the Executive Government, I, for one, will give him every facility for bringing on the Vote on Account. I should like myself to have every day till March 31 for discussion of the Vote on Account, and I think I can promise the Government occupation enough in discussing the Votes in every department, and the conduct of the Government in respect of them. I do not desire to throw any obstacles in the way. I think before we proceed with these matters that we ought to have a clear understanding from the Government of what they are going to do on Thursday with regard to the Vote on Account. These is no legal objection to this being done; and I have it from my right hon. Friend (Mr. Childers), who has great experience in such matters, that the question by no means stands on a single precedent as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said. If necessary my right hon. Friend will show that is not the case. Whether it be so or not, as my right hon. Friend (Mr. Gladstone) has said, if there was not a precedent, you ought to create a precedent effecting a settlement of the claim. We do claim the right to challenge at full length the proposals of the Government on the Vote on Account, and I think we ought before we proceed any further on this Resolution, to understand from the Government that they are going to give us every opportunity which the letter of the law allows, to bring their conduct under the judgment of the House and of the country.

Dr. TANNER: I wish to say a word or two in respect to what fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Unfortunately, the Chancellor of the Exchequer on several occasions has seen fit to make statements which I cannot say are false, but which are not characterized by exactitude. From unofficial records kept in this House of the length of time hon. Members speak, I find that the other evening I spoke twice, on each occasion five minutes. I was the only Irish Member who spoke below the Gangway during the whole course of the debate before 12 o'clock. Then, again, we find on this record that no less than 10 Members sitting on the Government side of the House took up the major portion of the time of debate up to a quarter past 10 o'clock, and that there were only two Liberal Members who took part in the discussion. I think it is simply ridiculous for the right hon. Gentleman to search round for some of us on whom to fasten his mis statements — mis-statements which I think are unwarrantable coming from a gentleman of such high position as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think he really ought to feel very sorry for having offended in this way, and I think he ought to promise not to do so again. I feel rather annoyed, Mr. Speaker, at this rather unwarrantable charge of obstruction which the right hon. Gentleman threw out against me, but I also regret having used the expression which I did at the time the right hon. Gentleman threw out the charge against me.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to enter into any engagement with the right hon. Gentleman as to the way in which I shall endeavour to conduct the business of this House, and I am sure he will see that any engagement of the kind which he desires would be one calculated to impose a very serious inconvenience upon public business.

*Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I am very sorry the right hon. Gentleman cannot accede to the practical engagement which my right hon. Friend asked for, because all my right hon. Friend sought was that the Vote on Account should not be absolutely closured on Thursday next. As it is admitted on all sides that these debates could be taken on Monday or Tuesday, and as the Government have already obtained the next Tuesday for the purpose, I should have thought the right hon. Gentleman would have acceded to the request. Let me put to the House —and I have some experience on the subject, having been Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer—what precisely is the character of the Ways and Means Act, commonly called the Consolidated Fund Act. We do not pass simply one of those Acts at the close of the financial year; we usually pass three or four such Acts in the course of a Session besides the final Appropriation Act. The Bill passed within the last few days in the month of March is, except as to one clause to which I will refer, precisely the same as the Bills pased in April, May, June, and sometimes July. Each of these Acts contains two clauses. One of these clauses empowers the Government to pay out of money authorized in the Committee of Ways and Means what has been voted by Parliament in Committee of Supply. And that power to pay what has been voted in Committee of Supply is used, not once, but dozens of times during the Session, with respect to expenditure which has not been included in the authority of the Ways and Means Resolution. I say distinctly, and from my experience—and no one sitting on the front bench will differ from me— that the rule is this, that if you have a sufficient amount voted in Ways and

Means, whether in the first Act, the second, or the third, or the fourth—if you have a sufficient balance to meet a particular expenditure, all that is necessary is that the Vote should have been passed in Committee of Supply and reported, and it is not necessary that the particular amount of that Vote should have been included in Ways and Means Resolution. All through the year the Treasury proceed upon that principle, and are constantly issuing money for the service of the different Departments before the amount has been included in the Ways and Means Act. But in the first Act, that passed in March, there is an additional clause, and it refers wholly to the Supplementary Estimates. It is necessary that the Supplementary Estimates should not only have been voted, but that they should be the subject of the Ways and Means Act before the last day of March. If any gentleman will refer to the first Consolidated Fund Act of last Session, he will find this additional clause, which he will not find in the subsequent Acts. It is absolutely necessary that the Supplementary Estimates should be voted and included in the Ways and Means Act passed in March, but it is not necessary as to any other Estimates. Over and over again every year moneys are paid in accordance with the Votes of Parliament that have not been included in Ways and Means. There is thus no difference in principle whatever between the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Acts. Finally, of course, the Appropriation Act recites the actual Votes and authorizes payments under them, but this is on the last day of the Session, when half the expenditure has been already defrayed. But as to the intermediate Ways and Means Acts, the sum named is merely what happens to be the total of the Estimates passed, when leave is given to introduce the Bill, and is merely named as a matter of convenience, the Clerk at the Table being responsible for the amount being correctly added up. I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that it has only once happened that the Vote on Account has not been included in the sum taken in Ways and Means. That may be, as in ordinary times there is no pressure as to Votes being taken in sufficient time; but I remember that in 1874, no Army or Navy Votes were, in consequence of the House being late, taken before the first Ways and Means Act. For each Service a Vote on Account was taken; and then, after the Act passed, proper Votes, on which alone expenditure could be based, were adopted in Committee of Supply. We are now in a similar position, the House having met a fortnight after the usual time, and I trust, therefore, that the Government will not persist in an objection which they admit is not founded on legal considerations, but is most inconsistent and in principle altogether novel.

MR. JACKSON: Mr. Speaker, I, of course, would hardly like to put my opinion on this question against that of the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, but, so far as I am able to judge, he has advanced no new reason; he has simply reiterated what has been admitted by right hon. Gentlemen and by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it is not absolutely necessary to include the Vote on Account in the Consolidated Fund Bill, for which the Royal Assent must be obtained by the 31st March, in order to comply with the strict law. I venture to suggest to the House whether it will approve of what I cannot describe otherwise than as an evasion of the intention of the law. It is true that the Vote taken for the Army and the Navy does provide money which may, without breaking the law, be used for the purposes of the Civil Service, but I would ask the House to consider what this may tend to. If the right hon. Gentleman's principle is not only sound, but desirable in itself, perhaps he will carry it a little further, and admit that it is not necessary to take Ways and Means in the Consolidated Fund Bill for a Vote on Account of the Civil Service, so long as we have money already voted for any other purpose. If that be so, then it will place in the hands of the Government of the day a power which, surely, it is very undesirable it should possess—namely, a power of postponing the discussion on the Civil Service of the year until such a date as it might be compelled to bring it on by the absence of money derived from other sources. I hope, Sir, that the House will not sanction the proposal that money which has been clearly and distinctly voted for the purposes of the Army and Navy should be thus, by the deliberate sanction of the House, appropriated, without any restriction, to the payment of the amounts which fall due for the Civil Service, and I hope that the House will strengthen the Government in its action in this matter. I venture to appeal to the former utterances of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, who, in times past, has most firmly taken up this position; and I trust that, for the sake of financial regularity, this Vote will be included in the Bill which must receive the Royal Assent before the 31st March.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: As these matters are matters of very considerable importance, I should have been glad if we could have debated them with the advantage of strict official information in our hands. That we have not got, however, and it is undoubtedly unsatisfactory to be reduced to rely upon memory in such matters. But, Sir, I must say, with regard to the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, his official zeal has entirely misled him. There is a broad distinction of principle between the Military and Naval Services on the one hand, and the Civil Service on the other hand. The hon. Gentleman stated that it would be an evasion of the spirit of the law to apply money voted for the Naval and Military Services to the Civil Service. I challenge that statement. It is not so in point of fact. We have not voted money at all for the Military and Navy Services as such. All we have done is to vote the first Vote, and, carrying the hon. Gentleman's argument to its logical conclusion, according to him, you have no more right to take the money under that Vote and use it for other Naval and Military Votes than you have to apply it to the purposes of the Civil Service.

Mr. JACKSON: There is a clear distinction between the two cases. It is permitted by law, as the right hon. Gentleman knows. There is a great distinction between applying money voted under a particular head for the Naval and Military Services to other Votes on the same service, and applying it to the Civil Service, which is entirely distinct.

Mr. GLADSTONE: There is no reference whatever to it in the Ways and Means Act. It is quite plain that the restriction, if there be one, applies to Vote 1, which has been actually voted for the Navy and Army; and if you take the money under these Votes and apply it to other military and naval purposes, it is exactly the same thing as if you applied it under Ways and Means for the purposes of the Civil Service.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, that the issue before the House is whether sufficient time shall be allowed for the discussion of the Vote on Account —whether, or not, it shall be closured. The First Lord of the Treasury said he appealed to the House and to hon. Gentlemen opposite whether he had not always allowed reasonable time for discussions; but, Mr. Speaker, that is not our view. Our impressions on this subject are very different indeed, and there is a strong feeling on this side of the House that we have not been allowed a proper opportunity of discussing matters here. I do not base that statement upon mere recollection. I hold in my hand a Return, laid on the Table of the House during last year, which contains an account of the number of times when the Closure Rule was put into operation, and from it I find a fact of remarkable significance, for it seems that during the Session 1887-8, on no less than six different occasions, the assent of Mr. Speaker, or the Chair, was withheld from the proposal to apply the Closure when it was made by the First Lord himself. I think, Sir, that that is ample proof that the First Lord of the Treasury has used the Closure Rule in a manner which he himself will allow, after the action taken by the Chair, not to have been reasonable. No reply has been given to the very cogent remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for North Longford with respect to the extraordinary number of propositions contained in the Motion of the First Lord, and no adequate defence has been made of so remarkable an innovation of the practice of Parliament as is now proposed. I venture to say that the proceedings of Her Majesty's Government, in moving this Resolution, will be appreciated outside this House, for it will show that their desire is to stifle the discussion on the Vote on Account, and therefore I heartily support the Amendment which has been moved.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member who has just sat down has indicated his belief that we desire to stifle discussion. I wish to say again that the Government are prepared to meet any charge which may be brought forward.

*MR. ELLIS: Without the Closure?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If it appears to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian and his colleagues that the discussion on the Vote on Account is inadequate and insufficient for the purposes which they have in view, and if the right hon. Gentleman will place on the Paper the terms of any Motion censuring any Member of the Government—in any form that he may think will best bring forward the whole question he desires to raise—we will meet him at once; and after the Vote on Account has been taken we will give not only Government time, but all the time we can control for the purpose which the right hon. Gentleman desires. We will give a full, complete, and exhaustive debate upon any question of censure which can be raised in this House. I absolutely repudiate the charge that we have endeavoured to stifle debate, and I say the suggestion is perfectly unworthy of the hon. Gentleman who made it. We have done nothing of the kind. When it has fallen to my lot as a Minister of the Crown to ask the Chairman of Committees to take certain action, I have only desired to do what appeared to me to be necessary in the interests of the House and of the country, and I deny distinctly that we have tried to stifle debate. I regret having had to intrude so long on the time of the House.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I understand the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman is that we should not take the opportunity of examining the conduct of the Government in Committee of Supply, but that we should take the offer to move Votes of Censure upon various Members of the Government as separate Motions. Well, Sir, there is an old saying about gifts which come from the Greeks, and I, for my part, must decline this wooden horse which is offered by the First Lord of the Treasury. And I will tell him why. First of all, the Committee of Supply is the place where you can cross-examine the Government. Cross-examination has lately proved to be very useful, and we desire to put the Government under cross-examination in Committee of Supply. That is the place where we can endeavour to extract the truth, and where we can put question after question until we elicit the truth. That is the place where, according to Constitutional practice, we can deal with the Government. Well, then, Sir, if it were necessary to give another reason, we cannot have Votes of Censure upon all the Members of the Executive Government, whose conduct is, in my opinion, deserving of the strongest censure. You cannot have 20 or 30 different Votes of Censure on all the Departments of the Government, and I should call that a very small number of the Members of the Government whose conduct has to be challenged. In fact, I do not know how many there ought to be. I think we shall have to ask the Home Secretary whether he has not done too little, and the Secretary for Ireland whether he has not done too much; and we shall have to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what he has done. There are, it will be seen, many forms of inquiry for which Committee of Supply is the legitimate and convenient organ, and, having that Constitutional organ at our disposal, we shall exchange it for nothing else. We stand by the Committee of Supply. That is the Parliamentary privilege of this House. That is the engine of the Opposition. That is the means by which they appeal against a Parliamentary majority to the opinion of the country against the conduct of the Executive Government. That is my answer to the right hon. Gentleman. We stand by the Committee of Supply.

*MR. C. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I wish to give one reason why I intend to vote for the Amendment of my hon. Friend below the Gangway. We have heard this evening of an incident which influences my vote. I mean the Home Secretary's admission that Richard Pigott had been permitted by the Home Office—and by no one else, for the Prisons Board is under the control of the Home Office—to visit Delany the convicted dynamitard in gaol here, after the Government knew that Pigott, on his own admission, was a tainted witness, and had been charged with forging documents which he was about to give evidence upon. That, Sir, seems to me so grave a fact that the Vote on Account ought not to come within the scope of possibility of being closured on Thursday.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I have absolutely no knowledge of the matter to which the hon. Member alludes, and I cannot see what bearing it has on the subject. The observations of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby seemed to indicate that there were going to be five-and-twenty Motions of Censure at least during the Vote on Account. The prospect, therefore, is indicated that this Vote on Account is to be continued at least during half the Session. The right hon. Gentleman says that Committee of Supply is the means by which these matters are to be brought before the House; but what precedent is there for a Vote on Account being utilized for 20 or 30 Votes of Censure? There is no such precedent whatever. If Votes on Account were to be utilized in such a manner it would be absolutely impossible to make any progress whatever with Parliamentary Business. I am not sorry the right hon. Gentleman put the matter so clearly before the House. We see now it is not only a question of one night; the Vote is to be made the engine for the cross-examination of every Minister. It is interesting to observe, and I trust the country will observe, that a guerilla warfare suits hon. and right hon. Gentlemen much better than any opportunity of really bringing a distinct charge against Her Majesty's Ministers which they will be compelled to verify and on which a distinct issue may be taken. We thought that on this Vote on Account there were to be some definite and distinct attacks made on Her Majesty's Ministers. We were charged with endeavouring, by shortening this Vote on Account, to stifle discussion. We have now offered the opportunity for unlimited discussion on distinct issues to be brought against the Government, and the moment that offer is made the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who is most forward in bringing every kind of insinuation and innuendo, gets up and refuses to join issue with us upon any particular point. I believe the House might leave the matter there. [VOICES: "Kennington!"] Ah, yes! Kennington, of course! You wish to rest on the judgment of Kennington rather than on the judgment of this House. Hon. Gentlemen opposite wish to parade Kennington before the country, and not to endanger the effect produced by accepting the challenge we make to them to bring forward any distinct charges against the Government. Well, we are very sorry. We should have liked to join battle. But they refuse. They prefer to continue this kind of cross-questioning They wish to continue I do not know how many weeks upon this Vote on Account without coming to the real business of the House. They do not wish to approach any legislation; this is to be the chief work of the Session. I cannot interpret their words in any other way. It cannot, however, be supposed that the House itself will be willing to prolong this debate indefinitely. We have made what we consider to be a most fair offer to our opponents, and I can only express our surprise that it has not been accepted in the spirit in which it is made.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 270; Noes 166: Majority 104.—(Division List, No. 25.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I need hardly say that I cordially support my hon. Friend and Colleague in opposing this Resolution. I propose to conclude the remarks I am about to make by moving an Amendment, because I believe that if this Resolution is to be passed there are certain portions of it which ought to be amended. I think that the House ought to protest against the reckless assertions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer whenever he speaks of hon. Members sitting on this side of the House. Among other things which the Chancellor of the Exchequer cited as an instance of obstruction from the Opposition was the first Vote for the Admiralty. Now I happen to know what occurred. I proposed an Amendment to reduce the number of men mentioned in the Vote. During the evening I did not move the Amendment, as there appeared to have been a reduction of 3,000 men, and because the supporters of the Government got up and delivered their usual general essays upon the Admiralty, and I thought it would be uncivil on my part to interfere until they had got through those essays. I moved my Amendment at half-past 11. It was a perfectly legitimate Amendment, whether right or wrong. The Division took place at 12 o'clock, and occupied half-an-hour, after one or two Members on this side of the House had said a few words. In these circumstances, I consider it most unfair that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should bring these general accusations against this side of the House. There is no man in the House who wastes more time than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a man of figures, facts, and statistics, is a great deal too combative. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has attacked the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt). But I have heard the right hon. Gentleman make the same attack 50 times; indeed, the right hon. Gentleman never gets on his feet in the House without saying that the right hon. Member for Derby makes speeches in order to obtain cheers from his own side of the House. The right hon. Member for Derby naturally gets up to speak, entertaining the same views as hon. Members on his own side of the House, and, of course, those hon. Members naturally cheer him. Would the Chancellor of the Exchequer not be surprised if hon. Members behind him cried "Oh, oh!" when he spoke? Let the right hon. Gentleman be satisfied with the cheers which he elicits from that side of the House; but do not let him waste any more of the time of the House by complaining that when hon. Gentlemen get up on this side to express the views of the majority of the Opposition their expressions are approved of by the Party with whom they act. The right hon. Gentleman says—"Why have a discussion on the Vote of Account? Why not propose a Vote of Want of Confidence?" The fact is that we have a *primâ facie* case against the Ministry; but we want to cross-examine them; we wish to establish the case from their own mouths. We could not do this in a general debate; but we look upon this Vote on Account just as a Royal Commission. We want to have our Royal Commission in the House in order to cross-examine the right hon. Gentlemen. But the Government say, "Not at all; we will not accept that; we want to make long speeches and then come to a general decision on the matter." Another reason why we cannot follow the advice of the right hon. Gentleman is that it is mistaken tactics, when there is a clear minority in the House, to indulge in Motions of Want of Confidence. On such occasions the friends of the Government come down to the House in strong force, and, after defeating the Motion, they go through the country swaggering and saying that they have been whitewashed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that a guerilla warfare is monstrous. Well, that is just what we are going to carry on. Guerilla wars before now have proved successful; they waste the forces of the enemy. We are not going to engage in pitched battles against the master of many legions on the other side of the House. I agree with my hon. Friend and Colleague, and I would not give a single day to the Government, because never a day in their hands passes without their doing some sort of evil. I would not give them a day, nor afford them the opportunity of getting a single sixpence. The Government may, by means of the Closure, force Supply through; but there is no reason why we should be called on to aid and abet them in maintaining a position which is a false one, because they have not got the country at their back. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury shows a certain sort of suavity, but I discovered long ago that his suavity is very Machiavellian, and the more urbane the right hon Gentleman is, the more utterly I distrust him. What occurred a little while ago? The right hon. Gentleman wished to lay his hands upon a portion of the days set apart for private Members, namely—Tuesdays. The right hon. Gentleman said we should have an opportunity of airing our grievances. He said he wanted half a day for the discussion of the Estimates, and now that he has got it he wants to prevent the discussion of those Estimates, and he practically puts the Closure on the discussion of the Vote on Account. The front Opposition bench asked whether the Government gave up the doctrine that the Vote must be had on Thursday; but the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury said they must leave it to his judgment. What does his judgment mean? It means the Closure. The right hon. Gentleman talked of his duty to the country, but I know of only one duty which the right Gentleman owes to the country, and that is to consult the country. Let him do that. We shall be perfectly satisfied with that; but if the right hon. Gentleman takes up an attitude of defiance, and refuses to consult the country, then we will throw every obstacle we can in the way of the transaction of public business. [*Cheers from the Ministerial benches.*] I say what I mean; I believe it is our business to do everything we can to provoke a Dissolution; and one of the means of doing that is to render public business exceedingly difficult in the present Parliament. I, for my part, am prepared to do everything I can to attain that excellent, most admirable, and most Constitutional end. The Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury will cause us to sit not only after 12 as long as the right hon. Gentleman pleases, but after 6 to-morrow as long as he pleases. A most important debate is to be inaugurated on the Vote on Account, and, owing to the small amount of time meted out to us, the discussion will be kept up at an hour when there can be no adequate report of it in the newspapers, and when the House is weary and tired out. Anybody who will refer to the pages of *Hansard* will see that what I say is correct. The 12 o'clock rule was adopted after lengthy consideration; and it was fully understood that it was only to be abrogated when it was necessary to close on a particular night some special debate. Personally, I would not object to our meeting at 10 at night and adjourning at 10 the next morning; but I do like regular hours; and we have now got accustomed to breaking up at 12 o'clock. There is an agitation going on to limit the hours of labour to eight. We meet at 3 and adjourn at 12, so that we have 9 hours' hard work, and we are now called upon by the right hon. Gentleman to continue our labours still further. There is no good reason whatever for that demand of the Government. It is altogether unnecessary to go on after 12 o'clock. We want a fair debate, but it ought to be continued during proper legislative hours. The legislative shop ought to shut up at a proper hour. I beg now to move as an Amendment that the following words be struck out of the Motion:—

Mr. Labouchere

"Such financial business may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5. But after such proceedings are disposed of, no opposed business shall be taken."

Amendment proposed, in line 7, to leave out all words after the word "down" to the end of the Question.—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot accept the Amendment. The hon. Member has stated that it is his intention to offer every possible obstruction to Public Business, and, under those circumstances, it is perfectly clear that it would be seriously injurious to the public interests if the Government were deprived of the facilities which this addition to the Motion will afford them. The powers we ask for are urgently necessary in the position in which we stand—namely, the power to close a discussion when an adjournment would be exceedingly injurious to Public Business. There are many instances when a debate may be closed with advantage to the House, and it is impossible for any Minister to use a power of this sort except with the general assent of the House. I would humbly represent to the House that we have now been discussing this Motion for three hours, and any further prolongation of the discussion must take away from the time available for the consideration of the Estimates in Supply and the Vote on Account, which we desire to approach. The House has already, by a very large majority, refused to strike out a certain portion of the Resolution; and I would, therefore, again urge that we should now come to a conclusion on the Motion and allow business to proceed. The feeling of the House has been sufficiently ascertained by the Division which has already taken place.

*Mr. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I must protest against taking the discussion on the Vote on Account at an hour when the public Press cannot report what we say, and when the Ministry and their supporters will care very little for our arguments. Gentlemen on this side desire to speak to the country through the House.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 267; Noes 161.—(Division List, No. 26.)

Main Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes 265; Noes 166:—(Div. List, No, 27.)

Ordered, That until the Proceedings on the Supplementary Estimates 1888-9, the Excesses 1887-8, and the Vote on Account for 1889-90 in the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, and on Report therefrom, and the several stages of the Consolidated Fund Bill, are concluded, the Proceedings thereon shall have precedence of other Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions on every day for which they are appointed. The provisions of Standing Order No. 56 shall be extended to any day on which the said Votes are set down. Such Financial Business may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. 5. But after such Proceedings are disposed of no opposed Business shall be taken.

MOTIONS.

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CHARITIES, &C. EXEMPTION BILL.

On Motion of Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bill to exempt Charities and Hospitals from Local Rates, ordered to be brought in by Sir Julian Goldsmid, Baron de Rothschild, Sir Robert Fowler, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Octavius V. Morgan, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 164.]

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT (1887) AMENDMENT (LEASEHOLDERS) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macartney, Bill to amend section one of "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887," in regard to Leaseholders, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macartney, Mr. O'Neill, Colonel Waring, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Lea, and Mr. William Sinclair.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 165.]

WAYS AND MEANS.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Resolutions reported.

(1.) "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, the sum of £90,091, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

(2.) "That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1890, the sum of £9,267,300, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund."

Resolutions agreed to:—Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson."

Bill presented, and read first time.

SUPPLY.

Resolutions [18th March], reported.

(1.) "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889, for certain Expenses of the Law Agent in Scotland for Government Departments."

(2.) "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £24,690, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, for Public Education in England and Wales."

(3.) "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £28,310, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1889, for certain Charges connected with the Orange River Territory, the Transvaal, Zululand, Bechuanaland, the Island of St. Helena, and the High Commissioner of South Africa."

Resolutions read the first and second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do agree with the Committee in the First Resolution."

THE DISTURBANCES IN SKYE.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): In rising to oppose this Resolution, I am aware of the position in which the Government are placed in regard to time, but I maintain that the carrying or the abandoning of the Resolution has nothing whatever to do with the passing of a Vote on Account, and that it might be abandoned without the slightest difficulty to the carrying on of the affairs of the nation, and with considerable advantage to the credit of Her Majesty's Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the debate last night, which was brought to a premature close by the intervention of the First Lord, attempted to draw a red herring across the course of this discussion, leading the Committee to believe that in our opposition to this Vote we were actuated by personal dislike of Sheriff Ivory, and that there was no matter of principle involved. This the right hon. Gentleman more than insinuated—he said it. Now, I utterly deny that I have any dislike whatever to the gentleman whose name happens to be mixed up with this Vote. It has been my misfortune on various occasions to find myself interested in the wrongs of various people in order to get those wrongs righted, and on this, as on other occasions, I have not hesitated to approach the Law Courts to assist persons in getting what redress they could. I have seen the Game Laws harshly administered, and when what I thought a legal mistake was made, I have not hesitated to have it brought before the Law Courts, and on one occasion I had the satisfaction of getting a conviction quashed, and damages awarded against a gamekeeper who acted illegally. On another occasion, a ship's crew belonging to the Clyde appeared to have suffered grievous wrong at the hands of their employer, and I did not hesitate to bring the case before a Court, where I got compensation to the tune of £2,000 for the men. This is a precisely similar case, but the explanation why we fight it so bitterly is that the payment of this money is a gratuitous and gross insult to the vast majority of the people of Scotland—I may say to the people at large—represented by the 27 Scotch Members who voted against the Government last night, while only eight Scotch Members voted with the Government. The right hon. Gentleman says my charges against Sheriff Ivory were virulent, but that has really nothing to do with the matter. The question we have to discuss is whether the Government had any right gratuitously to interfere in order, at the public expense, to relieve a gentleman who happens to be a Sheriff from the consequences of acts, not committed in the discharge of his official duties, but in direct contravention of his official duty. The right hon. Gentleman quoted from Papers that have been read to the House, and which show that I advocated raising the question in assertion of a constitutional right; and then he said I had adopted a Plan of Campaign, and he evidently used the expression to throw discredit on us as Campaigners, in that the action we took was analogous to the Plan of Campaign elsewhere. But the right hon. Gentleman has greatly mistaken the intelligence of the Scotch people—even of the constituency that once returned him to Parliament—if he imagines they will be taken in by any phrase he may choose to apply in this matter. The conduct of the Government has taught us this, that if it is a Plan of Campaign, there may be more honesty in it than in the Government method of paying the expenses of a private individual surreptitiously out of the public purse. One of the gravest charges we make against the Government is the concealment they have practised throughout. If they believed they were justified, if they believed they were doing good, they certainly endeavoured to do it by stealth, and may blush to find it fame. There were three actions concerned, though only two came to trial. The first was raised by Macpherson against the Procurator Fiscal of the Skye district, but it was held to be incompetent, it being declared that the deeds in respect to which the action was raised were committed by the Procurator Fiscal in the discharge of his duty and were privileged, and the case could not go before a jury. That gentleman not being blessed, I suppose, with the influence of Sheriff Ivory, did not get off so well in respect to expenses. A large sum was paid in the shape of expenses. I took the trouble to apply to the agent at Inverness to find out what the expenses on the other side were. It is often the case that the expenses on the side of the plaintiff are greater than those on the side of the defendant, because the pursuer has to bring up witnesses and to pay the whole costs. In this case the pursuers were non-professional, their solicitor had to be paid, their counsel and witnesses had to be paid, and their expenses should have been much greater. Well, in the case of Macpherson *versus* the Procurator Fiscal the expenses were £125, and the total sum given by the Treasury and the Procurator Fiscal was £59 8s. 11d., or not half that amount. So strict an investigation was not made into this case as into that in which Sheriff Ivory was defendant. The expenses must have been paid out of the Estimates of 1888. The Secretary to the Treasury has told us they were paid out of the Supplementary Estimates, and the date of payment indicates that must have been so. There was a Vote set down for the completion of Peterhead Harbour and other incidental charges, and we should never have heard of this demand but for a direct question put in the House on the subject, and then it came out during the Autumn Session. Under the general accounts, as rendered, it is impossible for any Member to tell what the Supplementary demand refers to, and it was simply by accident, as the result of a question put by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, that the fact was elicited that £200 out of the total was required to pay the costs of Sheriff Ivory. When the story was told such strong opposition was aroused that this Supplementary Vote was postponed to this Session, and that is why we got it so late in the financial year. If the Government had in a straightforward manner put the item down as they have now, it would have been challenged and discussed at once and disposed of before the House adjourned. I wish the House to understand why there is such a keen feeling on the subject in Scotland on this matter. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer read certain extracts, but he omitted certain disagreeable passages, and so did not show the grounds upon which I advised my friends to raise a fund to test the legality of certain deeds committed in these raids into the Highlands. I shall supply these omissions of the right hon. Gentleman. He ridiculed the idea of malice on the part of Sheriff Ivory. We have evidence that the Sheriff in connection with the expedition of 1885 minted medals for the reward of every policeman who arrested a crofter, and in the case of Beaton he took down the name of the constable who arrested Beaton with the view of presenting him with the much-prized decoration.

An hon. MEMBER: Who paid for the medals?

DR. CAMERON: The Government have denied that they have paid for them. I do not know if the cost was defrayed out of savings, or whether it was a purely personal undertaking on the part of the Sheriff. The Chief Constable of the county, who was the proper person to be put in charge of the expedition, had had a "tiff" with Sheriff Ivory, and the Sheriff took personal command of the police—a shameful and unprecedented thing in connection with the expedition. The deeds we complain of are these: the arrest of persons without any warrant at all, whole villages besieged and houses ransacked without any warrant or reasonable suspicion against the inhabitants. I could quote a number of instances from the *Glasgow Herald*, a paper that has no prejudice in favour of the crofters, and I have reason to believe that the very case given by the reporter of that journal could be supported in a Court of Law. That reporter describes how Sheriff Ivory, not being satisfied with the state of things and the disposition of the force, ordered more constables to be told off, and urged the men on to greater exertions by exclamations of "Go ahead" and "Get on with you." He marched men into houses and endeavoured to get the women recognized who were present; he ordered examination of every room, told the men to look into cupboards, under beds, and examine the byres, and leave no means of escape open. A midnight raid was made upon a house where an old woman of 70 resided; she was awakened in her bed by the gleam of a lantern on her face and saw policemen standing around; she was asked where her husband was; she was a widow; she was asked where her son was, she replied in his grave; she was asked where her girl was and replied that she had none. She was very much frightened, and fainted after the police left. Dozens of such cases might be quoted. In one of the first houses invaded, a man named McLean was dangerously ill; he was much affected by the domiciliary visit of the police. and soon afterwards died. His wife describes how much the visit of the police affected him, and how in his sleep he murmured about the difficulty of meeting the expenses of his funeral. To carry her husband to the churchyard the wife had to beg the assistance of friends at a distance, the men of the neighbourhood being either in custody or hiding in the hills. The funeral procession was met by the Sheriff and his escort of police on their way to pay another visit to the house of the dead man, but they did not go when they heard whose corpse was in the coffin. These are some of the incidents that have stung the people of Scotland into indignation. In these expeditions there was the greatest brutality on the part of the police. We have an instance in which an officer burned down a house illegally. He was reprimanded forsooth! but he was never brought to trial. We have it in evidence that on another occasion an infant in the cradle was included in an inventory of the contents of a house by an officer, and it is alleged also that he threatened to burn the house down unless the people paid the amount he was charged to collect. These are the things that roused the public indignation, and I must say that it appears to me a matter of some importance that, before we allow such proceedings to be carried on with impunity, we should put their legality to test in a constitutional way. Three actions were raised. Sheriff Ivory said there were not more than two we could attempt to support out of all the charges made in my speech when this movement was initiated, but why was this? We had no desire to harry Sheriff Ivory—our desire was to settle constitutional points, and so three typical actions were taken. In one of these cases a technical difficulty was found in connecting the Sheriff and Procurator Fiscal with the order upon which the police acted. Of the three actions, one was raised for libel, one on the subject of arrest without warrant, and another for keeping a person in prison for a long time without evidence and then liberating him without apology or excuse. Now, Sheriff Ivory was in the habit of libelling—never a report of his appeared but somebody was libelled in it. The Lord Advocate remarked that I had made libellous statements in this House in respect to Sheriff Ivory, but let me say I uttered those statements outside the House. The speech from which Sheriff Ivory quotes is not privileged, and Sheriff Ivory has the opportunity of raising any action upon it he likes. But I say in this official document he has libelled Norman Stewart, and he did so while the case was pending before the Sheriff Substitute. It is upon the evidence of the representative at Inverness of a Glasgow newspaper that Sheriff Ivory possessed himself of telegrams in a very equivocal fashion, and then he stigmatized the reporter to whom these telegrams belonged as a ringleader in the riots that attended the crofter movement. The Sheriff accused his own officers of committing perjury, and said that perjury was the cause of Stewart's escape. So there was every reason why we should take up an action for libel. Then another reason was that Sheriff Ivory was habitually in the habit of disregarding the rules laid down to regulate the conduct of officials, and with no justification whatever, and not with the honest impression that he was entitled to do as he did. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his attempt to rescue Sheriff Ivory from the consequences of the illegal action in which he was cast for damages, accuses us of organizing a Plan of Campaign, but let me say that it was owing to the dislike of myself and certain of my friends to do anything in the nature of persecution against Sheriff Ivory, that the other cases were not carried on appeal to the House of Lords. I should certainly be the last man to discountenance such a proceeding now, and I believe such an appeal is still open. If there is such an appeal, I do not think the Government will be so ready to renew their demand for Sheriff Ivory's damages. I think they will be inclined to let Sheriff Ivory hang by his own tail, and sink or swim according to his own deserts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer charges us with wasting time over a small item of £200. Will not his ideas of £ s. d. allow him to see that the Scotch people have subscribed considerably more than this sum to test this as a constitutional principle. We resist this clause on constitutional grounds, and shall carry our protest to a division.

*MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): It certainly is a new character for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to insist against the wish of Scotch Members in paying this sum out of the Exchequer. During the debate incidents have been brought out that make this case tolerably plain, but perhaps I may be allowed to call to the recollection of the House the circumstances out of which these Highland expeditions arose. The people of Skye claimed a right of grazing on land which the proprietor resisted. An interdict of the High Court sustained the contention that there was no right of grazing, and it was because of a breach of this interdict that the whole of the expeditions took place. But mark the result. An Act of Parliament was passed appointing a Commission to inquire into crofter grievances, and that Commission took evidence in regard to this grazing right. What did the Commission find? Why, they made the agent of the landlord produce documentary evidence to show that the people had the right. That incident would be quite sufficient to account for all the feeling which has been manifested during these proceedings, and to bring all the so-called upholders of law and order into utter contempt. As a matter of fact, it was shown that the tenants and the people persecuted by Sheriff Ivory were the real upholders of law and order. They have been proved to have been in the right, and I call on the Lord Advocate and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deny these facts if they can. We have got to this time of day, that the Government, who will not pay anything in response to the just demands of the people, come forward, and, in the face of the people of Scotland, insist on expending £200 on an action for which Sheriff Ivory ought to pay himself. If the Government desire to take the steps best calculated to force on the agitation for Home Rule in Scotland they are doing it, and in so far as they are doing it I am thankful to them. I have great pleasure in supporting the proposal of my hon. Friend that the House do not agree with the Committee.

*MR. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.): This is a very bad case, and the feeling throughout Scotland is so strong in reference to Sheriff Ivory on account of his conduct on the two expeditions that he took part in to the Isle of Skye, that we feel bound to protest against this payment. The £200 now asked for may be taken to be the costs in the case of the man Stewart, and the case ought to have been—and was, in fact—a private suit of this man against the Sheriff. The Sheriff had no occasion to say what he did about Stewart in his report. What was the result of the action? Why, there was no trial. The language the Sheriff made use of in his report was unjustifiable, and the Sheriff did not attempt to justify it; on the contrary, his counsel stated distinctly that the facts did not justify what he had stated about Stewart, and, therefore, the case went by default. I think myself that the Government are ashamed of this matter. Why was it that they tried to smuggle the Vote through last December without saying a word about it? As the hon. Gentleman the Member for the College Division of Glasgow (Dr. Cameron) has remarked, it was only by an accidental question put by an hon. Member that it was discovered that this £200 was concealed in another Vote. There are several other things the hon. Member for the College Division has said to which no answer has been returned by the Lord Advocate. The right hon. Gentleman has evaded the issue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer twitted those who opposed the Vote last night by saying that there were very few Scotch Members present to discuss it; but on the right hon. Gentleman's own side of the House there was not a single Scotch Member to defend Sheriff Ivory. No one had a word to say for him except the right hon. Gentleman himself. And the Division List must have shown the right hon. Gentleman what the Scotch Members think of Sheriff Ivory. On the Division five private Scotch Members supported the Vote, and 26 Scotch Members opposed it. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be able to explain that to the House, if he has anything to say on the subject to-night. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke of the action taken by Stewart as a bogus action; but Stewart was a poor man, and how, I ask, could sympathy be better shown than by contributing money to enable him to defend his character? If the right hon. Gentleman would not have had the man go to Court, will he say what other course he should have taken? It was necessary to adopt either civil or violent means. A great deal of bitter feeling has been excited in Scotland in consequence of the action of Sheriff Ivory, especially on his second expedition. The reports in such newspapers as the *Glasgow Herald* and the Edinburgh *Scotsman* show that by day he was but a mere man-hunter and by night a sort of official moonlighter. No wonder there has been so much agitation against him. As to the publication of his Report, it cannot be contended that the public service required it, nor was that the reason of the publication. He says himself that he was prompted to it by the charges made against him by the Rev. Mr. M'Cullum reflecting on his conduct in making arrests, feeling, as he did, that Mr. M'Cullum's charges should be contradicted at once, in as public a manner as they had been made. The interests of the public service had nothing whatever to do with the Sheriff's action; and in view of all the circumstances of the case, I shall vote against the granting of this £200, as I consider it a gross misapplication of the money of the taxpayers.

MR. M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I desire, as a Scotchman, to enter my protest against this Vote. I know a good deal of—in fact, I know intimately—the details of the case, and I do not approach it with the view of needlessly taking up the time of the House, but because I feel that the conduct of the Government, in pressing the Vote on the House in opposition to the strong wishes of the great majority of the Scotch Members, is conduct which will be disastrous to the best interests of the Highlands. There are one or two points I wish to touch on—points which, I think, have not been brought out by other speakers in the course of the debate. There are two admissions in Sheriff Ivory's statement that I want specially to call the attention of the House to, and these two points refer to the action of the Law Officers of the Crown in refusing to take up the Sheriff's case. On page 7 of the Correspondence, Sheriff Ivory himself states that he instructed his agents to obtain the services of the Solicitor General for Scotland as one of the counsel in Norman Stewart's case, but that the Solicitor General returned the papers and declined to act, on the ground of his official position. The Scotch Solicitor General saw that it was not to the interest of the Crown to interfere—an example which it would have been well for the English Law Officers of the Crown to have followed in another case. On page 8 of the Correspondence, Sheriff Ivory says that, in consequence of the difficulties for which the Crown authorities were, to a large extent, responsible, he was advised that the Lord Advocate, by declining to conduct his defence, had plainly intimated that there were no public interests involved in the action. That sentence seems to me a very vital one. If there were no interests of the public service involved, I want to know why we are called upon to pay this £200? If the matter had been one of public interest, and the public interests had been involved, the Lord Advocate or the Solicitor General for Scotland ought to have defended the Sheriff, or to have been willing to defend him; but if there were no public interests involved—if the Lord Advocate thought that then, and has given no reason to lead us to believe that he thinks differently now—we should not be asked to vote this money. It is clear from the correspondence that, in the deliberate judgment of the Treasury and the Government, Sheriff Ivory ought not to have his defence paid for; and the only reason why they have now changed their mind is because they have been worried into it by that gentleman, the Sheriff having written that if the matter had been referred to Mr. A. J. Balfour, who was intimately acquainted with the work he had to do in Skye, he would have been treated differently. I protest against the Government having allowed themselves to be hectored by Sheriff Ivory in this way. Is an official to be screened and compensated by a Government when he does wrong and has to pay for his wrong-doing? I consider it unjustifiable on the part of the Government for them to indemnify an official, when by his deliberate action, without the sanction of his superior officers in the Government, he commits an irregular act. The fact is undoubted that Sheriff Ivory libelled Norman Stewart; for he himself expected that if he had allowed the case to go before the Court he would have been found guilty. I maintain that you will create a very bad impression in Scotland by voting this money. It must be remembered that this innocent man, Norman Stewart—a poor man—was arrested, put in prison, and very nearly convicted, and yet no proposal has ever been made to compensate him. On the other hand, you have the rich man—the official in the Government Administration in Scotland—breaking the law, libelling an innocent man, and when he is obliged to pay damages, the Government come in and grant him an indemnity. You will create a feeling that you are condoning a breach of the law, and seriously embitter the minds of the people of the Highlands against your administration.

The House divided:—Ayes 230; Noes 138.—(Div. List, No. 28.)

It being after ten minutes to Seven of the clock, further consideration of the Report of Supply stood adjourned.

Remaining Resolutions to be further considered this day.

Order for further consideration of remaining Resolutions read—

Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the second Resolution."

EDUCATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

*MR. M. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) said: I am anxious to get some explanation from the Vice President of the Privy Council on certain points. I complain that very little elasticity is given to this Estimate. Looking to the Annual Report, we see that while the day schools earn 18s. 1d. per head of the average attendance, our voluntary schools earn 17s. 0¾d. per head, then it is understood by the House that 17s. 6d. per head can be earned very readily without any assistance from voluntary sources, I think the Government will be doing their duty if they make the annual grant on the Estimates a little more liberal in the near future than they made it last year or are likely to make it this year, according to the information placed before the House. The Government know that the voluntary schools can easily earn 17s. 6d., so that it will be seen that 1½d. is scarcely a liberal estimate to make. By cutting down the Estimates there is no opportunity given for schools to educate their children up to the Schedules of the Code, especially Schedule IV., which formulates a goodly number of advanced subjects and provides for any scheme of instruction, manual or otherwise, which is marked with illustration and experiment, thereby earning for every individual pass in any given one or two such subjects 4s. per pass. I think, therefore, the Department ought to come to the House to ask for a more liberal grant than they are asking. Contrast this sum with the Naval Vote. We were told last year that our Navy was in a state to resist any two Powers, and to-day we are asked to spend some millions in order to strengthen the Navy, which it was said could do such excellent work last year. If a million or two were given to education and a million or two deducted from the Naval vote, the country would be far better off in the way of investment. I wish the Department to take into consideration the advisability of increasing the popular grant, so that more elasticity may be given to the work of the managers and teachers of schools in the country. How does this plan work by keeping the grant at 17s. 7½d. per head? It comes to this, that the teachers and managers of the country are of opinion that private instructions are given to the Inspectors to the effect that the merit grant "excellent" should not be given to more than 17 per cent for the whole of the schools of the country. We know that schools which receive a "bad" merit grant in 1888 will work hard in 1889 to obtain the mark "good" or "excellent." When it is understood that the merit grant makes a difference of £5 on an average attendance of 100 in a school contrasting the mark "good" with the mark "excellent," and of £10 contrasting "excellent" with "fair," hon. Members will see what a difference is made in the apportioning of the "merit" grants to the schools. It comes to this: that schools which work very hard in 1889 to redeem themselves from the stain on 1888, at the end of the year are unable to get the mark "excellent" because of the rigid limit of administration of the popular grant, which is estimated on shabby lines by the Department. That should be plainly understood. My object in getting up is to draw the attention of the Vice President to this state of things, and to induce him to use his influence for its improvement. Teachers are in a state of nervous trepidation in respect of examinations; knowing very well that by reason of the instructions given to the Inspectors, it is utterly impossible for them to obtain the mark "excellent" because of the necessity that inspectors are under to keep down the grant. But, Sir, there is another point: we have actually a rule published by the Department, that singing shall not be paid for in infant schools unless the senior girls' department are taught singing by note, so that little children of from three to seven years cannot earn the singing grant. I ask the Vice President whether the girls' schools have not decreased in numbers in the matter of earning the singing grant? Fancy little children being sent to school and not being allowed to use their voices in singing in the senior girls' school, because no singing is to be taught except by note. Fancy the Education Department coming down on the infant department and preventing little angel voices being heard unless their elders in another department are taught by note. They are not allowed to relieve the tedium of their school life a little save on that condition; they get no grant otherwise. I shall call the Vice President's attention to these things in Committee, and I shall use every means the House affords me to press upon him those questions. Another question is that of technical education, which ought to be popularly encouraged. I hope it will be found that when the Vice President places his Estimate for Education upon the Table that he has provided for technical education in a liberal manner.

*Sir W. HART DYKE (Dartford, Kent): Mr. Speaker—Sir, the observations of the hon. Member were directed to two points. The first point deals more especially with the grant given on the Education Estimates. Well, as regards that grant, I am not here to say whether it is a good or evil thing that it has been maintained at this particular point; but I may impress this upon hon. Members—that any change in this respect requires an Act of Parliament, which must be very carefully considered. But with regard to the other points raised in the hon. Member's speech, I think the changes proposed in the Code, which proposals will be distributed amongst hon. Members on Saturday next, or at the latest on Monday, will meet many of the difficulties to which the hon. Member has referred, and especially the difficulties under which teachers labour. I believe that those difficulties will be absolutely met by the proposals which are to be distributed amongst Members. The hon. Member has referred to the question of singing in girls' schools. I will take particular note of what he has said; but I must say that it is new to me that which I have heard with respect to singing by note. It is our object to promote the taste for singing in all classes. All I can say is that, if the new Code introduces a change in the least degree in that respect, there will be no difficulty in amending it. The hon. Member has referred also to technical education. Well, Sir, I am not here this evening to divulge what will appear in the new Code; but I have already said in this House on more than one occasion that we should propose very much to open the schools in future in the case of additional subjects taught. In fact, the policy in which we hope to enlarge the new Code is this — to secure that the three R's are thoroughly taught in the schools, and for all other additional subjects greater freedom will be allowed than has ever hitherto obtained. I am sure the hon. Member will forgive my not replying to his observations at greater length, because in a very few days their new Code will be in the hands of hon. Members, when it will be fairly discussed.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Camborne): I am very glad that the hon. Gentleman has made a reference to the new Code, and I sincerely hope it will fulfil the expectations which on former occasions he has led us to entertain. I hope that drawing is to be reinstated in the girls' schools, and that it will be restored to the position which it ought to occupy. There have been great complaints about this among those who are interested in girls' education, and it is a great mistake to suppose that drawing is not supported in girls' as well as boys' schools. I desire, however, rather to ask for an explanation of the figures in the Supplementary Estimates. It does seem to me an extraordinary thing that there should be a deficit of no less than £24,690 in the Estimates which are proposed in a matter like this of education. It is a matter of calculation, and I cannot understand how it is that you should be asking us for an additional sum. The fact that it is so suggests to some of us, at any rate, that there has been a tendency on the part of the Department rather to set an example of cutting down than of raising the whole scheme of education. In the absence of the information I ask for, it would, perhaps, hardly be fair to complain of the Government in this respect; but I may remark that it does suggest that the Department has not been too anxious to increase the number of day scholars to the extent we should desire. I hope that during the coming year they will be able to calculate with sufficient exactness what is required for the succeeding year, so that it will not afterwards be necessary to ask for a further large sum. I do not understand on what principle the amount of the grant for the 3,663,000 day scholars has been arrived at so as to be put at 17s. 7½d., because in the last quarter of 1887-8 the grant for Board Schools was put at 18s. 1d., and for the Voluntary Schools at 17s. 0¼d. I should have thought that, if the case was as in the preceding year, we should have required an increased grant for the expected increasing number of scholars of the following year, and I do not know on what principle the Government have calculated their anticipated increase in the number of scholars for the year now closing. From their own confession, indeed, they have miscalculated. In 1887 the average attendance of day scholars was 3,527,381, and now they give us in the details of the Vote asked for the number of 3,663,000 day scholars, which seems to me to be a very small increase compared with what might have been expected from the yearly increase of the population. In the same way, in 1887 the number of night scholars was stated at 30,984, but the estimate for the following year was only 36,000. I have drawn attention to these figures because it does not seem to me that the Government have done what might have been expected from them in the shape of allowing an ample margin for the development of education. I agree with the hon. Gentleman who has already spoken, that we look to the Government to do everything in their power to set a good example on this matter, and not to give the public the impression that they are trying to cut down and limit either the sum to be expended or the number of children to be educated. I hope we shall have no such procedure as was seen in the case of the last London School Board, whose practice was rather to restrict than to extend the scope of education. The hon. Baronet the Treasurer of the London School Board (Sir R. Temple) shakes his head; but we know very well that this matter has been gone into, and the general impression in the Metropolis to-day is that such was the case. For my part, I trust it will be the case no more, and I venture to express the hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council will see his way to prevent for the future the miscalculations to which attention has been called.

Dr. TANNER (Mid Cork): Before any decision is taken on this matter, I wish to say that the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Council has not been what we on this side of the House are entitled to expect. In answer to the speeches that have been made, he said, "Oh, wait till my Code is introduced, and then you will see how all these matters will be dealt with." Might I suggest to the right hon. Baronet—for really in dealing with one matter we are dealing with all—that instead of his giving us only Returns in connection with the two difficult questions which the right hon. Gentleman just now spoke of, in respect to the 17s. 6d. rate and the singing by note, surely the House of Commons is, or at any rate ought to be, entitled to more than the indefinite Returns it has received from him. The right hon. Gentleman is always extremely courteous, and in most cases extremely willing, to give us some information as to the Department over which he rules; but I cannot say he has been so to-night, and I sincerely hope that instead of the indefinite system which appears to pervade responsible Members of the Government, and instead of this matter with regard to the little children who have been referred to by my hon. Friend——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! I must warn the hon. Member that he is not speaking with any intelligent relevancy to the subject now before the House.

Dr. TANNER: In order to make myself thoroughly relevant, I must say that my hon. Friend near me has called attention to the 17s. 6d. rate and also to the question of singing by note, and I wrote down the answer of the right hon. Gentleman as to both these points, and certainly as a private Member I should think it would be better when responsible Ministers of the Crown get up to answer such matters if, instead of saying they will be dealt with at some future time by a Bill, they said they should be dealt with on the instant, or that at any rate definite Returns should be given showing the amount by which the Government propose to deal with these things. I, however, hesitate to go further into controversy on this matter, because I freely admit I have not studied the matter of English education, though at the same time I hope hon. Members will permit an Irishman to express his opinion on the narrow methods and means employed by English Members of the present Administration.

Resolved, "That this House do agree with the Committee in the second Resolution." Question proposed, "That this House do agree with the Committee in the third Resolution."

SOUTH AFRICA AND ST. HELENA.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I desire to have an answer to a question which I put yesterday, with regard to the item of £60 for an expedition to Walfisch Bay. Is it not a fact that Walfisch Bay belongs to the Cape; and, if it belongs to the Cape, having been retained under the British flag in defence of Cape interests, I desire to know why the British taxpayer should be called upon to pay for this expedition and not the Cape Parliament? £60 is a very small matter, no doubt, but the principle involved is a large one, and whether the amount is £60 or £600,000, it appears to me that the principle is the same, and that the taxpayers of this country should not be called upon to pay the amount unless there is some reason for it. As to the whole question of South Africa involved in this Vote—that is to say, the extension of our Protectorate and the payment for 200 extra police—I may say that I was breakfasting this morning with the envoys of Lo Bengula. We have been told that Lo Bengula has asked Her Majesty's Government to step in, in order to deal with concession hunters, but the gentleman in charge of the envoys, who was once on the staff of Sir Charles Warren, declares that the envoys have not come to this country in connection with this question of concessions, but for a political object—namely, to seek the alliance of this country against the Boers and Portuguese. I do not wish to press the Under Secretary for the Colonies too hardly on this point. We must be content to leave discretion with the Colonial Office, as they are in possession of all the facts of the case, which we are not. I should be sorry to tie the hands of the Government, but at the same time I think they ought to give us such information on these subjects as they can offer without detriment to the public service.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: As regards the 200 extra police required in Bechuanaland, perhaps the Under Secretary will be good enough to give us some explanation as to why information was not obtained from the Cape in reference to the case of Captain Segrave, who was connected with this force, and dismissed for embezzlement. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us how it is that it should take from the 19th December to the 20th March to get a reply from the Cape?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The point the hon. Gentleman raises has no reference whatever to the Vote before the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg pardon. I understand that the gallant Lieutenant was a member of the Bechuanaland force.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to the question put to me by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, I have to say I thought I had answered him last night as to the Walfisch Bay Expedition. The item of £60 is inserted for the purpose of paying the expenses of Colonel Phillips, who was sent to Walfisch Bay to negotiate with the German representative with regard to a tract on the south-east of the Walfisch Bay Territory. There is an international question between this country and Germany, and as the negotiations are pending the House will understand that it is not possible for me to enter into details on the matter. Then, with regard to the statements the hon. Member referred to as being made to him at the breakfast with Lo Bengula's envoys, I have to point out that the gentleman who is conducting these natives has no authority to make any statement on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, and Her Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for any statement of his.

*Sir J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): May I ask, where is the "Orange River Territory"? I thought I had some idea of the geography of South Africa, but I am at a loss to know where this territory is, and should like to have more information on the point.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): With reference to this Walfisch Bay mission, I should like to know when these negotiations will be completed, and when we shall be entitled to discuss the result? I do not think it is a proper thing to ask us to pay this £60 and yet refuse to give us any information on the subject. The more immediate question of interest, however, is in regard to some information which appears in this morning's newspapers in reference to the disturbances in the interior. I find from Reuter's telegram that one of our own people is creating disturbance, or at any rate, is mixed up with people who are rising and driving German settlers down to the coast.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: There is nothing with regard to Damaraland in this Vote.

MR. CONYBEARE: If the right hon. Gentleman knew as much about this territory as I do, he would be aware that Walfisch Bay is a little strip of territory cut out of Damaraland, and that, therefore, I am perfectly in order. Can the Under Secretary for the Colonies give us any information as to whether the disturbances I refer to are affecting our interests in Walfisch Bay? We have just had news of the slaughter of a number of our people in another part of the world, namely, in China, and I think the Government should consider whether it is not necessary to protect our people in Damaraland. As to the envoys of the Chief Lo Bengula, I think we are entitled to have some information as to what line of policy Her Majesty's Government proposes to pursue in regard to that country. The Colonial Office seems habitually devoid of information in respect of this territory in South Africa. There is a letter in an evening paper from Mr. Haggard, who has just returned from Matabeleland, and he states that though he is the last Englishman who has been in Lo Bengula's country, and offered to give Lord Knutsford information regarding the state of the country, his Lordship refused to see him on the ground that he had more pressing business to attend to. Not very long ago it was stated that we were going to assume some sort of indefinite Protectorate over the whole of this country, and I sincerely trust that Her Majesty's Government will not sanction the exploiting of this magnificent country for the benefit of two or three individuals connected with the Rhodes and Rudd concession. Mr. Haggard was refused permission to enter this territory, although he at last succeeded in doing so, and notices have been issued that nobody is to go into Matabeleland or Basutoland, and without going into the question whether we ought to assume responsibility for the whole of Matabeleland, I think we ought to avail ourselves of the opportunity of the presence of Lo Bengula's representatives in this country to see that no injustice is done to our people there. I am as opposed to wholesale annexation as anybody, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, in Matabeleland with its great mining wealth you will soon have very considerable British interests. It is only reasonable when the opportunity presents itself that we should take measures to protect our interests hereafter, and that will be best done by carefully considering, and not by peremptorily rejecting, the request which has been referred to Her Majesty's Government by the envoys of Lo Bengula. I will not go the length of saying that we should appoint English Residents, but it must be obvious that it is impossible for the Chief Commissioner living in Cape Town to protect British interests so far from the seat of Government as Matabeleland. I trust that the Government will without undue delay afford us some reasonable opportunity of carefully discussing the whole of this important question, because if we do not go into it the time will come when we shall be involved in some stupid difficulties arising from our disinclination to face the questions of the day, which will involve us in the expenditure of hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of pounds.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I hope an answer will be given to the question with regard to the Orange River Territory. We all know where the Orange Free State is; but as there is a new name we ought to know——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must remind the hon. and gallant Member that this Vote has nothing to do with the Orange River Territory.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST, Chatham): As the Under Secretary for the Colonies has exhausted his right to speak, perhaps I may be allowed to answer the questions addressed to him. The matter principally touched upon by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Conybeare) were fully dealt with in the House last night, and if he had been here and heard my right hon. Friend's speech, or read it in the ordinary channels of information, his curiosity would have been amply gratified. He spoke of Damaraland,

and although the hon. Gentleman's geographical knowledge of South Africa seems to be unexceptionable, I am afraid I cannot congratulate him upon his political knowledge of native territories. The district he referred to is not British territory but German territory, and we have nothing to do with it. As has already been stated, Her Majesty's Government will discountenance any attempt to create disturbance on the part of British subjects, but beyond that they have nothing whatever to do with Damaraland, and Damaraland has nothing whatever to do with the Vote before the House. With regard to Lo Bengula, as my right hon. Friend stated last night, communications have been addressed to the Chief, and until his views with reference to those communications are known, it is impossible for the Government to give any further information or any further pledge as to what their policy will be. If hon. Gentlemen opposite had attended in their places last night and discussed matters in Committee, there would have been no occasion to raise them on Report. As regards the other questions which have been put, if hon. Gentlemen who were not here last night desire to have them answered by the Under Secretary for the Colonies, and if they will give notice in the usual way and have their questions printed on the paper, no doubt answers will be returned.

MR. CONYBEARE: I brought before the House subjects with regard to which information appeared in this morning's papers, therefore I do not see how I can justly be accused of dealing with matters which I might have discussed last night.

Resolution agreed to.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1888-9).

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS VI.

(1.) £9,500, Supplementary, Superannuations and Retired Allowances.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I shall endeavour, as arranged, to give the House the names of the persons to whom awards have been made. The sum asked for is divided into several sub-heads. Under sub-head A come all superannuation allowances awarded as the result of services, and limited to the period of years of service or retirement from ill-heath on medical certificate. No Supplementary Estimate is asked for under the sub-head B—compensation allowances. It is a matter of satisfaction that this sub-head this year is not in excess of the sum voted. Sub-head C comprises gratuities awarded either to Civil servants who have not served ten years, or to higher servants under certain conditions. I will deal first with sub-head A—superannuation allowances—and I will give to the Committee the names and amount of pension which have been awarded in each of the cases which come under this sub-head, in the order in which they appear in the details on the Vote. The first item is "Colonial Governors," for which a sum of £1,000 is asked. The reason for that is that a pension has been awarded to the Colonial Governor Weld, who was 65 years of age, and to whom a pension of £1,000 has been awarded. A Colonial Governor is not entitled to a pension unless he is 60 years of age, and has administered the government of a colony or colonies for periods amounting in the whole to 28 years, of which, at least, four years must have been as Governor of a colony in which the salary of the Governor is not less than £5,000. Governor Weld possesses all these qualifications, and, therefore, the Committee will agree that this pension has been well earned. The next item is for the "National Debt Office." There have been four requirements—namely, Mr. H. Court, who has been granted a pension of £833, his age is 67, and he has had 52 years' service; Mr. H. C. Cole, a pension of £353, age 69 and 49 years' service; Mr. T. Russell, a pension of £466, age 62 and 42 years' service; and Mr. Haffenden, a pension of £364, age 60 and 38 years' service. I may point out that the total of these sums is £2,017, while the amount asked for is £1,000, the explanation of which may be taken to be that pensions have fallen in, which enable the total sum to be paid with an additional Vote of £1,000. The next item is "Police-Courts." A pension has been awarded to Mr. Mansfield, who is 75 years of age and has had 28 years' service. He is entitled under the terms of his employment to additions for professional qualifications, and he has been awarded a pension of £1,000. His salary was £1,500. The next item is the "Supreme Court of Judicature." Under this head we find—Mr. P. Marshall, a pension of £400, age 69 years, with 29 years' service; Mr. Ross, a pension of £400, age 71 with 35 years' service; Mr. W. R. Kemp, a pension of £466, age 72 with 60 years' service; Mr. T. Coghlan, a pension of £400, age 76 with 45 years years' service; Master Hodgson, a pension of £1,000, age 72 with 31 years' service, and addition for professional qualifications; Mr. T. Howard, a pension of £466, age 70 with 55 years' service; Mr. S. Richards, a pension of £466, age 72 with 45 years' service; and Master H. Pollock, a pension of £900, age 62 with 36 years' service. Two men have retired from the Pay Office which was attached to the Supreme Court. They are—Mr. Hair, a pension of £520, age 58 with 39 years' service; and Mr. Naylor, a pension of £406, age 50 with 33 years' service. In both of these cases there are medical certificates which have satisfied the authorities that both these officers are quite broken down in health. The amount of these pensions is £5,426, but only 2,300 is asked; pensions falling in making up the difference. The next item is "Prisons." The sum asked for consists of a list of small pensions too long to give to the Committee, but I think that it is a matter of congratulation that the Prisons Estimates are being year by year largely reduced, that the staff is being reduced to suit the requirements, and that none of those pensions come under any other category than that of persons entitled to pensions on retirement. In every one of these cases, except two, in which broken-down health, verified by medical certificates, was the cause of retirement, the men were over 60 years of age and entitled to retire according to the rules of the Service. In none of these cases has any addition been given except in two cases, in which the persons have been granted the additions to which their professional qualifications entitled them. Another item is the "Compassionate Fund," which appears on the Vote as sub-head C. I venture to make an appeal to the Committee, which I hope will be responded to—that the Committee should vote this money to meet what are known at the Treasury as hard cases. Without this money the Treasury has no power to meet such cases. In 1887 an amending Act to the Superannuation Act was passed by Parliament. Prior to that it had been the custom at the Treasury to exercise what are known as "extra-statutory powers"—in other words, to meet exceptionally hard cases, the Treasury had exceeded their statutory powers, and had given gratuities to men who were outside the four corners of the Act. When that amending Act passed through the House, the Treasury gave a pledge that if the Act were passed they would simply confine themselves within the limits of the Act, and they had since endeavoured to confine themselves strictly within those limits. There were cases, however, which arose from time to time which, I venture to think, are those most deserving of consideration. They are the cases, first, of men who have not the requistite number of years of service to entitle them to superannuation allowance at all. Next, the cases of hired men who are entitled under the Act of 1887 to one week's pay for each year of service. I think I shall be able to show the Committee cases in which that small compensation is inadequate to the circumstances of the case. I will mention, first, the case of a man named George Frost, a postman, who, while delivering letters, slipped on some ice and fell, and was so severely injured that he was retired from the Service, and his capacity for self-support is materially impaired. That man has been given a gratuity of £33, which is the total amount the Treasury have power under the Act to give to him. If the Committee are good enough to pass this Vote, we shall be able to give him a further gratuity of £25. John Leaky, a postman, while delivering letters, was struck by lightning. He was obliged to retire, and was totally incapacitated. He was entitled to £11 17s. 3d., but if the Committee give the Government the power we now ask, he will receive a further gratuity of £25. Daniel M'Carthy, a hired Admiralty labourer, met with an accident which brought on epileptic fits. The man appeared to get better, and he was taken on again; but while at work on board a boat he fell overboard and was drowned. His widow was refused a pension because the lapse of time since he met with the original accident made it impossible to connect the death with the accident. It is now recommended that the widow should receive £15 for herself and £2 for each child under the age of 15. Joseph Barrett, a hired postman, while delivering letters, was struck on the head by a cricket ball, and was so badly injured that he was compelled to retire, and was unable to contribute to his own support. He will receive no gratuity, because the injury he received was not directly attributable to the nature of his employment. It is now proposed to give him £25. I may say that a sum of £500 has been asked for in the Supplementary Estimates for this purpose, and there has been placed in the Estimates of next year, for the approval of the Committee, a sum of £700. It has been provided that the administration of this sum shall be governed by the strictest rules; that the amount shall be placed at the disposal of the First Lord of the Treasury for the time being; and that the First Lord of the Treasury shall be entitled to act in these particular cases only on the recommendation of the Treasury. I hope that I have shown that, although these are cases which are outside the four corners of the Act which we have to administer, they are hard cases which deserve consideration. I wish to say that it is difficult to avoid Supplementary Estimates in connection with the Superannuation Vote, because it has been the practice—and it is difficult to avoid the practice—to make the amount up of the sums which are on charge up to the 30th November. In other words, the Superannuation Vote for the current year, which will be presented to Parliament, say at the end of February, will contain all the superannuation allowances which are known up to the 30th of November preceding. But it is impossible for anyone to estimate the number of retirements that may take place during the year, or the number of pensions that may fall out of charge during the year; and therefore it is the most difficult of all the Estimates to estimate accurately. I hope, however, that I have convinced the Committee that at any rate the Vote now asked for has not been submitted without the most careful consideration of all the circumstances connected with the matter, and that they will be justified in agreeing to the Vote.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I am sure we are obliged to the Secretary to the Treasury for the full statement he has made, but at the same time I cannot help saying it would have been infinitely better had the statement been presented to us in writing. The statement is extremely satisfactory indeed; there is only one or two observations I want to make upon it. The hon. Gentleman has told us that in two cases pensions have been granted to gentlemen entirely broken down in health, and that medical certificates were received to that effect. We were so thoroughly convinced in the discussion which took place last Session of the great abuse which had taken place in allowing officers to retire on the certificates of private medical practitioners, that we welcomed the pledge given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the practice should cease, and that in future certificates would only be accepted from public and responsible officers. I should like to know whether that pledge has been fulfilled? Again, I see that one gentleman has retired at 67 years of age, and after 52 years' service, and that another gentleman has retired at 72 years of age after 60 years' service. I should like to know whether all these years' service count in assessing the amount of pension to be given?

*Mr. JACKSON: In no case is more than two-thirds of the salary given as pension, and in no case are more than 40 years' service counted in fixing a pension.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I will only add I think the whole House will heartily assent to the grants in the hard cases which the hon. Gentleman has mentioned.

Mr. JENNINGS (Stockport): This Vote as it was presented to the Committee was open to very great objection; but I think that the most serious objection has been removed by the statement which has been made by the Secretary to the Treasury. Although I think it is a shameful thing to give very large pensions to persons who have done nothing to deserve them, and who have not been in the service of the country for more than three or four years, I admit that under the system which now exists the people who give to the public very many years of faithful and hard service are justly entitled to their pensions. On this score, therefore, I shall certainly make no objection to this Vote. I think that postmen and persons of that description get far too little after their period of service has expired. My objection to the system is that the money has gone too largely into the hands of persons who, by influence or by some other circumstances, have received large amounts without rendering any services whatever to the country. There are several points in connection with this Vote to which I should have liked to refer. I must say that it is a serious thing that these Supplementary Estimates should have been so long before the House as they have been. The period of time which has been devoted to some questions is very discouraging to Members who have objections to make to particular items; and considering the state of public business and the manifest desire which the House has shown this afternoon to arrive at the Vote on Account as soon as possible, I think I should best consult the wishes of the Committee if I do not move the Amendment of which I have given notice.

*Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne Division): I should be the last man in the world to object to any reasonable remuneration by way of pension or otherwise to those who have faithfully served the State. What I object to is, that we do not deal with the different classes of public servants on anything like equitable terms. When we consider what paltry sums these poor incapacitated postmen and others receive, and what large sums are granted to old gentlemen on retirement, I think it will be admitted that we reward the latter on a higher scale than we do their less fortunate brethren. The Secretary to the Treasury has told us that the man Frost was only entitled to £33, that Leaky was only entitled to £11 17s. 3d., that M'Carthy was entitled to nothing at all, and that Barrett will receive nothing unless we assent to this estimate. What I want to emphasize is that we ought to have an equitable scale of pensioning—for the highest as well as the lowest of our public servants. The Secretary to the Treasury has pointed out that in the case of hired servants like postmen, dock labourers, and others, the scale of pension is one week's pay for every year's service. Now, if we take the case of Mr. Mansfield's pension of £1,000, which is two-thirds of the salary he has received annually for 28 years, and apply to it the principle we apply to the case of postmen and others, what do we find? Why, that Mr. Mansfield is entitled, not to £1,000 a year, but to £784.

*Mr. JACKSON: The hon. Gentleman is confusing the two classes of servants. The men he refers to have not got Civil Service certificates.

Mr. CONYBEARE: What I complain of is that they ought to have. If you have poor men working hard for you for a number of years, they are just as much entitled to have their services recognized in the form of pension, if you admit the principle of pensions, as other people. You deal out one measure to poor men, and another measure to rich men. I want to see all men treated alike. But one word in respect to what the Secretary to the Treasury has said as to prisons. I was glad to hear him say that prison establishments are being reduced, but I should like to be assured that the remark applies to the Admiralty prison at Bodmin. Is the scandal as to the sinecure offices connected with that establishment to continue? If it is, it is clear we shall be asked at some future time for superannuation allowances in respect of a number of offices which everyone admits are nothing but sinecures.

Mr. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): I think that the plain and lucid explanation of the Secretary to the Treasury has made it clear that the action of the Treasury in regard to disbursements under this Vote have been characterized by very great caution. In reference to the remarks of the learned Member for Cornwall (Mr. Conybeare) let me say that the real point of inequality in regard to these pensions is the allowance of ten years for professional qualifications. This is nothing short of an abuse, and I hope it will be dealt with by legislation. In the case of barristers who are appointed to well-paid positions of £1,500 a year, I fail to see why their retiring allowances should be calculated on more than the actual number of years that they have served. With reference to the compassionate allowances, I rejoice that such a fund now exists, as there used to be cases of great hardship which the Treasury desired to meet, and which they felt sure the House of Commons would desire to meet, but which, owing to the state of the law, could not be assisted. I am glad that this discretionary power is now given to the Treasury, and I feel sure that it is exercised with caution.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I should like some information as to what are the arrangements with regard to the reception of the medical certificates.

MR. JACKSON: Most careful scrutiny has been made into these certificates and in all cases where it is deemed necessary to get confirmatory evidence the Department obtain it.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask whether in view of the case of Mr. Wise, which occurred last year, the Bill which the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to introduce is intended to apply to Ireland?

*MR. GOSCHEN: We shall certainly apply to Ireland the provisions we apply to England. We shall see we get confirmatory evidence in the case of all pensions which are granted.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE (Stafford, Lichfield): Instead of getting confirmatory evidence would it not be better to have all officers applying for pensions examined in the first instance by the Government medical officer? It is very well known that no doctor likes to say that a brother officer has given a certificate which is not exactly correct.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: That is in the main the intention of the Government; but it cannot always be carried out because in many cases distant from London it is not possible to get examination by a central officer. We have been in communication with medical officers and have taken great pains to ascertain whether we can find anyone possessing the necessary qualification to undertake the work. We think we have done so, and we are about to make arrangements whereby in all principal cases the gentlemen applying for pensions shall be examined by a Government medical officer.

Vote agreed to.

(2.) £7,000, Supplementary, Pauper Lunatics, England.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I desire to point out that although the number of lunatics has decreased of late years the number chargeable to the poor rates has increased in each year. The number chargeable in January, 1888 was 72,486, but last year the number shows an increase of 1,602. Besides this there is the fact that in all cases the treatment of these unfortunate people is certainly not what any humane man would allow to pass without inquiry. Last year my hon. Friend the Member for North Fermanagh called attention to the case of John Stickley, a man aged 68, who was removed from the Hammersmith Police Court to Colney Hatch on the Saturday previous to the day on which my hon. Friend brought the case before the House. The poor fellow was said to be in a feeble condition but perfectly quiet. As a rule when patients are removed from a police-court or a workhouse to an asylum, they are certified to be violent; but this man was certified as perfectly quiet. On the Monday he was seriously ill, and on the Tuesday he was dead. At the time of his death it was discovered he had a broken jaw and that one of his teeth had been knocked out. At the inquest the jury found that the man's death had been accelerated by the injuries he had received, but nothing had since been done to arrive at the truth. It has not yet been shown how the man sustained the injuries. Surely the police who conveyed the man from the court to the asylum would have noticed that Stickley was suffering from these injuries if he had sustained them at the time. Certainly I should have thought that the Government would have granted an inquiry into the case; but instead of that the representatives of the Local Government Board fenced with all the questions which were asked upon the subject. I have here a list of 15 or 16 cases which demand some reply from the Minister in charge of this Vote; but I will not delay the Committee further, since friends of mine tell me there are many matters that are more deserving of public attention. I will, however, say I hope the Government will take into consideration the remonstrances addressed by responsible medical officers in the asylum service, as to the asylums being undermanned, in consequence of which the medical officers are quite unable to do their duty by the unfortunate creatures submitted to their care. Surely, in an asylum of 300 patients, one medical man, one assistant, and two clinical clerks are not enough to pay attention to the cases committed to their charge. The mere writing out of the charts of the cases would take all the time of such a staff. I have no intention of dealing with the matter at any length, but I sincerely hope the hon. Gentleman opposite will bring the matter before the Department under whose supervision these unfortunate people are, that they may be dealt with in the way humanity demands.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. W. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): I am sure the Government and the Committee are quite ready to listen to the suggestions of the hon. Member, but I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I say that the Department responsible for this Vote has no control over the administration of these institutions. The sole duty of the Local Government Board in connection with this Vote is to ask for this money and to see that each charge made is substantiated by the Board of Guardians, and this is the last occasion when it will be the duty of the Local Government Board to ask for this money. Any remonstrance with respect to administration should be addressed to the Lunacy Commissioners. The hon. Member has made some strictures upon the administration of those pauper lunatic asylums. For my own part, I have no doubt that there was some foundation for charges brought forward in various cases; but, as a whole, those institutions are very carefully looked after. The fact of a small Supplementary Vote being necessary is owing to the fact that the figures on which the original Estimate had been founded were somewhat misleading. I am sure that the remarks of the hon. Member will receive due attention in the proper quarter.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): Allow me to say that when public money is voted, then is the time for calling attention to defects in administration of any department concerned in the expenditure. As a medical man I thought it my duty to bring this matter forward.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VII.

(3.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £10,500, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889, for certain Advances to be made in Aid of the Emigration and Colonization of Crofters and Cottars of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, including Expenses of Administration."

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): It may perhaps be convenient that I should at this point express the arrangement by which the Government propose to carry out their view expressed last year, that there should be a review of schemes of State-aided emigration. We propose to appoint a Committee to inquire into the subject, and the terms of reference we shall propose will be as follows:—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into various schemes which have been proposed to Her Majesty's Government to facilitate emigration from the congested districts of the United Kingdom to the British colonies or elsewhere; to examine the results of any schemes which have received practical trial in recent years; and to report generally upon the means by, and the conditions under, which such emigration can best be carried out and the quarters to which it can most advantageously be directed."

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): In what respect does this differ from the Motion put on the Paper last year?

*MR. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Member compares the two he will see that this is considerably wider in scope than our proposal of last year; it includes emigration from congested districts not only in the crofter counties, but in other parts of Great Britain, and not only to British colonies, but to other parts of the world.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Does it include migration?

*MR. GOSCHEN: No; it does not.

*MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): Will the inquiry include the scheme under which the Government are now carrying on emigration from the Highlands?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The scheme of the Government is so far only experimental; it would be for the Committee to inquire how far it has answered, and whether it is desirable to give further effect to it.

MR. HUNTER: I see that £700 have been announced as the amount subscribed by private individuals in Glasgow towards this emigration scheme; is the right hon. Gentleman in a position to say if any further sums beyond this £700 have been received up to the present time.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes; I believe the remainder of the amount has been subscribed.

Mr. F. S. POWELL: I presume the phrase congested districts refers to rural districts, not manufacturing districts or mining districts? The term has hitherto been understood in that sense.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: No; our proposal is wider than that. You might have a congested district in the East End of London. The Government are anxious that the whole question of emigration should be thoroughly thrashed out. We do not want to put forward any scheme unless it has received the countenance of the House of Commons. The subject is one which is rightly considered of great importance both by the friends and the opponents of emigration; and there are few subjects upon which it is more desirable to have a full inquiry by a competent Committee.

Mr. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's): Is it intended to appoint this Committee at once? Will a Colonization Board be constituted to administer the fund which has been raised?

*Mr. ANGUS SUTHERLAND: Pending the Report of the Committee, is it proposed to suspend the present scheme?

Mr. HUNTER: I wish to ask whether, after the additional sums beyond the £700 are subscribed, the private subscribers will be allowed to appoint one of the Commissioners?

Mr. SETON-KARR: Will the fact of this Committee being appointed preclude any discussion in the House upon State-aided colonization?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I must admit that I think the subject would be better discussed after the Committee has been appointed. It is the intention of the Government to appoint the Committee at once, and it will be more satisfactory to have the whole matter threshed out upstairs before a general discussion is taken in the House. But, of course, hon. Members can take their own opportunity of raising a debate, or they will find it upon the Motion to appoint the Committee or on the terms of reference. The Government hope that in arranging this Committee they have satisfied to a certain extent those who are in favour of colonization. The £2,000, which are equal to one-fifth of the amount to be granted by the Government, having been subscribed, arrangements have been made for the Provost of Glasgow to represent the private subscribers. We do not propose to extend the present scheme for the emigration of crofters until the Committee have reported, except so far as pledges have been given to a limited number of crofters, who have made their plans, sold their stock, and whom it would be undesirable to disappoint. Otherwise we do not wish to move at all until we have the full opinion of the House upon the subject. I am glad to have this opportunity of answering these questions, and I think hon. Members will see exactly how the matter stands.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): After this announcement, I do not think there is any necessity for fighting out the question to-night. As a matter of fact, in discussing this Vote, we discuss money already spent. I, for one, desire that the question of emigration from the Highlands should be thoroughly discussed; but I do not think, under present circumstances, this is the opportunity. Under the condition that nothing further is done by the Government, I will not raise the question now.

Mr. SETON-KARR: Are the Government aware that a Colonization Committee, composed of 135 Members of this House and 30 Members of the House of Lords, has existed for the last two Sessions? These Gentlemen have thoroughly examined the subject, have taken evidence, and are prepared with a practical and sound financial scheme. I merely mention this to ask if the Government are aware of the fact, and whether that knowledge will have any bearing upon their own proposal?

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Have the Government considered the desirability of taking evidence from Colonists, and from inhabitants of other countries? I understand the proposal is to extend the investigation to all parts of the world. Now, it is well known that the class of people we want to get rid of—the paupers and the unemployed—are just those which foreign Governments, and even our own Colonies, will have nothing to do with. I hope, therefore, that arrangements will be made, by way of Commission or otherwise, for collecting evidence in foreign countries and the Colonies, if witnesses cannot be brought before the Committee upstairs.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Are we distinctly to understand that the Committee will inquire into emigration to all parts of the world, and not confine itself merely to British Colonies?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I distinctly read out the words "British Colonies and elsewhere." With reference to the suggestion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Seton-Karr), I am aware that there is such a Committee; but the Committee we propose will be composed not only of the friends of emigration, but of the critics of emigration. There are gentlemen in this House who have doubts as to the efficacy of emigration, and it is in order to get an authoritative decision of the House on this very important subject, which may cause considerable outlay, that we wish it thoroughly sifted both by the friends and supporters of the scheme and by the critics of it. As to the suggestion of the Member for Camborne, it would be most Utopian to lay down schemes of emigration without being fairly assured that those schemes would receive the warm support of the Colonies or countries to which the emigrants are to be sent. The agents for the Colonies in this country will be able to give valuable information with regard to the views of the Colonies they represent, and it will be important to have knowledge of the laws, say of the United States, which regulate emigration into the United States, and generally of the conditions under which emigration could be carried out. We wish to place no limits to the fullness of the inquiry.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): It seems to me that a most ludicrous *fiasco* has occurred to night. In order to avert threatened discussions the Government have been converted to the desirability of appointing Committees, and have agreed to three—one for mining royalties, another for dockyard administration, and a third for emigration. I am far from considering the present proposal as being in advance of the proposal made by the Leader of the House at the end of last Session. I disliked that proposal, because by it the Government tried to fix responsibility for a mismanaged scheme on the shoulders of a number of private individuals; but besides, this is not a question of emigration of people from the congested districts of the United Kingdom, including East London and Ireland; it is a question of £10,000 for crofter emigration, and I think the subject would have been better considered by a Committee specially appointed for the purpose, and mainly consisting of Scottish Members.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I may remind the hon. Member that such a proposal was made by the Government last Session, but it was objected to on the ground that it was too narrow, and that we ought to consider the case of other districts besides the Highlands, and other countries besides our own Colonies.

Dr. CAMERON: The right hon. Gentleman is not correct in his statement of the grounds of the opposition to that proposal. The ground of opposition was that the Government had started a scheme and bungled it, and proposed to shift the responsibility for that mess on to the shoulders of a Committee. Besides, it was offered too late in the Session. I have not the smallest objection to the appointment of such a Committee at the beginning of the Session, and I believe my own friends would agree with me on that point. But we would very much prefer to have a Committee on the special proposal for the crofters. On the 11th of April, the Secretary to the Treasury wrote various letters in which he said he had got the consent of the Treasury to the scheme of crofter emigration. That scheme had been warmly advocated by Lord Lothian for months previously. Lord Lothian publicly stated, in November or December of the year before last, that he was convinced that emigration was the remedy for the woes of the crofter districts, and it was said that if his views were not accepted by the Government he would resign. By April of last year he succeeded in convincing the politico-economical Chancellor of the Exchequer of the soundness of his views so far as to induce him to allow the funds of the general taxpayers to be applied to the benefit of one particular class. When the First Lord of the Treasury was asked why this scheme was to be carried out, he said that the Government were following the proposal of the Crofter Commission. People who had read the Report of the Commission believed that what the Commission proposed was quite contrary. Their scheme was that labourers should be sent out who were to be indentured to employers, and that was a scheme for which a small sum of money would be sufficient. The second part of the scheme was that families should be emigrated by the assistance of the State. They issued a circular, stating, as indispensable conditions for the success of the scheme, that each family should at once find means of subsistence on the homestead from the day of its arrival; and, secondly, that the cost should not exceed what the family could reasonably be expected to pay back in eight or ten years; and, thirdly, that the Colonial Government should take an interest in the scheme, see that the emigrants were properly established, and look after the repayment. None of these conditions were fulfilled. Instead of being allowed time to sell their holdings the crofters were hurried out, and therefore the expense was greater. When these men landed in Canada they were not looked after by the Canadian authorities; a representative of a land company carried them off. It was proposed that the Government should advance four-fifths of any sum not exceeding £10,000, on condition that the public subscribed the remaining one-fifth. Until a few months ago only £700 was subscribed, and the Government restricted their advances. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that the full amount of £2,000 has now been subscribed, and I should like to know from the Lord Advocate if that is correct?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): Perfectly correct.

Dr. CAMERON: I am glad to hear it. Now, as to what actually occurred, as a matter of fact, men were landed in Canada, arriving there about the middle of June. They were taken in charge, not by an agent of the Canadian Government, but by the agent of the Canada North-Western Company. I believe that gentleman bestirred himself in the interests of these people, giving attention to their welfare to an extent for which they ought to be thankful. But the care he took of them was not business with which the Government could in any way identify themselves. The scheme was a tentative one, to see if emigration could be carried out on such a large scale as would relieve the congestion of the Highlands. The proposal was that the men should be emigrated to Government lands in Canada, that £120 should be given them to pay their passage-money and settle them in their homesteads, the Canadian Government giving them the land under the Homestead Rules, while the Government held a lien on their holdings and stock for the amount of their advance. Mr. Scarth, the gentleman I refer to, looked about for a good place for the emigrants to settle in, having in his mind the desirability of placing them where they could fish, and he had in view also the necessity of supplying them with machinery, implements, and everything necessary for cultivating their land. All these things were provided. But it was found that there was no Government land available to meet the conditions, so the emigrants were brought down to a patch of territory belonging to the Canada North-Western Company, land selling from 6 dollars to 8 dollars an acre. Thus they got double the value of the land which the Government intended to give them—that is to say, they got what was equivalent to a present of another £120. They were, as I say, supplied with implements and stock, and the result was that Mr. Scarth, who took them in charge, greatly over-spent the money which was to be advanced. The Canada North-Western Company, who did not share the philanthropy of Mr. Scarth their manager, gravely objected to what had taken place, and so Mr. Scarth, was compelled, on the Government refusing to pay his outlay, to threaten to take back the stock he had given to the crofters. This brought the Government to book, and they advanced some £700 beyond the sum they had given under the original arrangement. So the crofters got another haul out of the Government, the £700 in question being divided among 30 or 40 families, and, after all, the Company was a loser in the matter. Some controversy took place over this—the crofters said they had been promised several things which were not given them. They said the understanding was that they should receive homesteads of Government land where they would have the right of preemption on another quarter section, and that this understanding had not been fulfilled. They said that the officer of the Board of Supervision who had superintended their emigration had said that they should receive similar terms to those which had been given to previous emigrants, which included provisions for the winter and seed for the summer, but that they found themselves at the commencement of the present winter without food and seed. Certain gentlemen who had been connected with the matter could not afford to see the scheme come to grief, and then it was, I understand, that for sheer shame's sake the money was subscribed. If it is impossible to find in a suitable district Government land in Canada on which 30 families can be placed with advantage, how in the world are the Government going to carry out the scheme to such an extent as to deplete the population of the Highlands to any appreciable degree? The contention is utterly absurd. I have never had any confidence in the scheme of the Government. It is utterly vicious so far as it gauges the amount of money to be spent by the Government by the amount of private subscriptions to the scheme. If the Government wish to emigrate a certain number of crofters, they must find the money for it out of their own resources, and the amount which will be required will be vastly more than is likely to be forthcoming, or than has been forthcoming. Schemes to the extent of £10,000 have again and again been tried, and have again and again failed. Sir James Matheson spent £10,000 in emigrating people from Lewis, but the island is as populous as ever. No doubt information on this subject can well be obtained by a Committee, but to mix up the question of State-aided emigration from all the large towns of England with this question of crofter emigration, to my mind, would be an absurdity. I have no objection to the question being dealt with. My object in criticizing the Vote is to show that the Government rushed into this matter without proper consideration by sending out men in a great hurry at a period of the year when it was impossible to fulfil the conditions under which emigration should have been conducted, and at a time when the emigrants were unable to plant corn or lay by any provisions for their winter use. The Government sent these people out, and they made so little arrangement for them that, according to statements in the Canadian newspapers, if it had not been for the kindly homesteaders, who gave them a few acres of land planted with potatoes, they would have come to grief soon after their arrival. The way this matter is brought before the House I think deserves criticism. The proposal was made in the course of a crofter debate, the Government declaring that this was the remedy they proposed for the state of matters that existed in the Highlands and Islands. They said they were determined to carry out this policy, as it was the policy recommended by the Crofter Commission. If it were not too late an hour I would ask how it was that it was only at the fag end of this Report that the Commission dealt with the matter, and whether it was not a very different kind of emigration that was referred to by them? The crofters in Canada have no doubt fallen on their feet by obtaining more than twice as much as they bargained for, but as a piece of statesmanship the whole thing has been utterly ridiculous. I do not intend to oppose this Vote tooth and nail. But it is through a piece of simple blundering on the part of the Government that so much money has been wasted.

*MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherlandshire): I agree with the hon. Member who has just sat down, that there is great danger in mixing up the case of the congested districts of England with the case of the Highlands of Scotland. The cases are entirely dissimilar, and whatever grounds there may be for emigration from the congested districts of England, these grounds do not exist in the Highlands. It seems to me that the Government simply want to continue the policy of the landlords prior to the passing of the Crofters' Act in 1886, when the landlords thought they would compel the crofters to emigrate by turning them off the good land and putting them on the bad land. I wish to ask the Lord Advocate from what part of the Highlands there has been any demand for emigration? I can give the right hon. Gentleman hundreds of instances where the people of the Highlands in public meeting assembled have passed resolutions asking for migration, but not for emigration. I have no intention of referring to the £10,000 which is asked to-night. I take it that the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a confession on the part of the Government of the failure of the scheme they originally proposed, and I hope the result of the inquiry will be that the Government will be induced to take the same view of the state of matters in the Highlands that the people themselves take, and that they will afford facilities to the crofters to give evidence themselves before the Committee. If the Government do that, I am satisfied they will be convinced that the question of the congestion of the Highlands is to be met by migration and not by emigration.

*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N): An hon. Gentleman behind me says that there is a Committee consisting of 125 Members of this House, and a large number of Peers, all in favour of emigration, and that, therefore, it is not necessary to have an inquiry——

MR. SETON-KARR: I said nothing of the kind.

*MR. BARTLEY: I am one of that Committee. We have only met once, and as yet this question of emigration and migration has not been discussed. As the question of colonization, emigration, and migration, is so important I am glad the Government are going to have a searching inquiry which may come to some sound conclusion on the matter.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I can quite understand that the Government wish to confine the inquiry within manageable limits, but I would suggest that the reference should be so drawn as to enable those who say that emigration is not desirable to put before the Committee the alternative of migration.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I also think that the Committee ought to inquire whether a remedy for the existing congestion in the Highlands may not be found in migration, and not in emigration only. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham has said that it is impossible to make advances to enable Highlanders to stock farms in the Highlands or in other parts of Scotland, because we do not know whether we shall recover such advances. But surely there would be quite as good (or even better) security for such advances if made in Scotland as for similar advances for stocking farms in Manitoba. I can confirm the statements made by the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow as to the scheme of emigration to Canada which has been referred to, and I think it is to be regretted that the Government should refuse to let the proposed Committee look at least into the question of what is the best remedy for the congestion of the Highlands, and whether the evil may not be met by migration to other parts of Scotland. Until that question is examined we shall not be satisfied; and though we do not oppose the Vote now, when the question for the Committee is proposed we shall move an Amendment.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Sir, the appointment of a Committee relieves the Committee of the House from considering, in any controversial or argumentative sense, the proposal of a grant of £10,000. It is desirable that the Committee should be appointed with a fair field and an open ground for inquiry, and that nothing should be prejudged before the investigation which takes place before the Committee. The Government submit, as one of the elements of inquiry by that Committee, what they justly call the experiment which is made in emigration under the present scheme, and it is because that is necessarily one of the chief subjects of inquiry that I desire to say nothing to prejudge the question as to the success of the experiment. At the same time that reticence on the part of the Government, Mr. Courtney, must not be misinterpreted as any indication of a belief that the scheme is to any extent a failure. I desire to say in a few words in what respects the experiment has been a success; and I would quote the words of its chief critic (the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow), who has said that in the present case the crofters have fallen upon their feet. I hope that when this question is considered by those who are primarily interested—namely, the relief of these congested districts, that they will have in view in any representations made to the Committee that emphatic testimony to the success of this experiment. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy has raised a point as to the scope of the inquiry, but before I mention that, because it is not an unimportant point, I desire to say in reference to the general tone of the remarks of the hon. Member for the College Division, that when the result of the recent scheme is closely examined, it will be found to contain great elements of encouragement, and that it has actually achieved success. No doubt he is right in saying that the exigencies which arose from the lateness of the season at which the emigration took place may have to some extent impaired the absolutely complete and uniform success of the individual emigrations. But all that is merely an incident of the scheme, which, given fair play, is likely to form a most encouraging field for the inquiry of the Committee. I turn to what has been said by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, who I believe approaches the subject, as I believe hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the Gangway opposite desire, in a spirit of perfect candour. This is a subject in which all classes of the community are vastly and vitally interested, and it is of importance, that the Committee, in its action, should have an entirely open mind as to the resources which the Queen's dominions present for obtaining the happiness of any class of her subjects. But, Sir, he will allow me to remind him that there are two subjects which are inextricably confused in the combination which he proposed. Hon. Gentlemen on the other side very properly emphasized the necessity of the Government exercising care as to the financial results of their experiments. One of the encouraging features in such emigration as has been experimented upon in the recent scheme is that there are Government lands available from the Colonial Government, and that these can be placed at the disposal of the emigrants. But when we come to the Mother Country, we are not in the position of having Government lands, and, accordingly, any scheme of migration is handicapped wih the enormous pecuniary burden upon the State of expropriation. It is a most serious question, and a most delicate social and economic problem, that of expropriation, The hon. Gentleman, on reflection, will see that the subject which he suggests stands in a different category from that of emigration, and is attended with difficulties of a most momentous kind. It is greatly to be feared that the Committee of Inquiry would find their usefulness largely hampered if they had to deal with a subject which might really lead to the embarrassment of more accessible scheme of emigration to Government lands which are available in the Colonies. As to emigration, there are a number of competing schemes; various experiments have been made, and materials are already to hand. Accordingly, the Committee of Inquiry into the subject will have the various interests placed before them. The scope of the inquiry proposed by my right hon. Friend is one most likely to lead to practical results. I hope I have conformed to the moderation of statement which is appropriate on this occasion, when we are on the threshold of an inquiry. I desire to impress upon the Committee this, that had this been the right occasion I was prepared to vindicate the success of the present experiment. But I think it is better to reserve the judgment of the Committee of this House on that subject, as there is prospect of an inquiry by a tribunal which will not only be completely impartial, but thorough.

*DR. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): In reference to what the Lord Advocate has said, I would recommend to the House that which was recommended by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. The First Lord of the Treasury told us the other night that he was most willing and anxious to do anything of the kind. And what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham suggested was this—that you should migrate those crofters who are willing and able to stock farms The Lord Advocate has spoken of the difficulties of expropriation, but I can assure the House that there are no such difficulties in the Highlands at all. There are hundreds, nay thousands, of farmers in the Highlands who have been groaning under high rents for the last 19 years, and who would be glad to pay for the chance of throwing up their leases. When the right hon. Gentleman says there is very considerable difficulty in emigration, I ask him why not migrate to Mr. Winan's forest? Does he think it very wrong to cause communities of crofters to be set up in the forest? The crofters have already been the subject of legislation, and under the Crofters' Act we have had the right to have a farm of 300 acres broken up, half of it to be divided among those crofters. Unfortunately the Government of the day, assisted by Gentlemen on the other side of the House, so hedged it about with rules and regulations, that only one crofter has so far benefited out of the many hundreds and thousands of crofters that have been already dealt with. The right hon. Gentleman says he is prepared to prove to this House that the emigration experiment has been a success. I do not deny that for a moment. I allow that success as far as concerns the 900 out of every thousand crofters who have gone to foreign lands. But that is no benefit to the people who are left behind; and it is with people who are left behind that we have to deal. Then, Sir, as has been pointed out, if the Government asked for 10, aye, 20 times the amount for emigration, the increase of the population is such that we would still have the same number of people left behind that we had at the beginning of the experiment, and the congested districts would be in just the same condition as they were before. If the Government are willing to adopt the advice given by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, they will introduce a Bill to amend the Crofters Act, so that land which farmers are willing to give up will be taken by crofters who can pay for stocking the farm and erecting buildings upon it. Surely, that is not an experiment which would involve serious cost. There are thousands of crofters who are able to stock the land and build houses, or they can get friends to help them to do so. If the Government can effect an amendment of the Crofters Act to that extent, we shall be able to show the country that there is a good number of crofters who are able and willing to take up the crofts without costing the country a single sixpence.

MR. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland): I did not gather from the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he had a sufficient number of intending emigrants to absorb the whole of the £10,000. If there is not a sufficient number, it would be decidedly needless to vote the whole sum, because it might not be actually needed by the Government. I ask the question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer the question. The number proposed to be emigrated this season would, according to the same proportion of expenditure as last year, nearly absorb £10,000. The hon. Member is probably aware that certain families were emigrated during last year, and the number proposed to be sent out this year is 40.

MR. CONYBEARE: Has the Government calculated how much money would be likely to be required for the purpose of emigrating a sufficient number of these unfortunate people to produce the slightest impression on what we call the congestion of these Highland districts? The Government emigrated a certain number of families last year; they were a mere drop in the ocean. They are going to emigrate a certain number this year; they will be a mere drop in the ocean. In order to produce the slightest impression in the congested districts throughout the whole United Kingdom, including Connemara, and the slums of the East end of London, you would want not £10,000, but ten thousand thousands of pounds, millions, for the purpose of expatriating the bone and sinew of our country. Before this Vote passes, I take leave to protest against the whole system of emigrating the working classes. You have ample lands in this country for the wants of the whole population. You have got, I believe I am right in saying, nearly two acres of land for every individual of the population of the United Kingdom. It is all very well complaining of the congestion of the population, but I hold you have no right to make such complaints as long as you have your deer forests and your extensive rabbit warrens, and your extensive fox covers. It is, then, nonsense to talk of migrating and emigrating the population. What you ought to do is not to emigrate the working classes who produce the wealth of the country, but those who have no visible means of existence. The sooner the Government propose to emigrate whole shiploads of

Dukes and Marquesses the better will it be for all concerned.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwick): We are speaking of the Highland crofters and not of the slums of London, and we have a right to press on the Government that they should consider in the Committee proposed the question of migration from one part of Scotland to another. If the Government consider the whole cost of emigrating a family—the cost to them, the cost to the Government of Canada, and the amount to be raised by private subscription—they will see that it would be sufficient to cover the cost of migration from one part of Scotland to another, which would do more good than emigration. I think this is a question that ought to be referred to the Committee, and I would further say that if the Committee have no power to consider such a matter it will fail to fulfil what should be one of its principal objects.

DR. CAMERON: The right hon. Gentleman opposite has stated that the cost of emigration per family would be £121.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: It is obvious the Government must exercise caution in the number sent out, so as to keep within the money at their disposal, and I spoke of the emigration of 40 families.

DR. CAMERON: Then, in that case, if you have £2,000 in subscriptions, you are asking for too much, as the sum you say you need would have a large surplus. That sum, amounting to £12,000, would emigrate 70 families, at £171 per family, which is £50 more than you say is necessary per family. It is unwise, as has been shown in many instances, to have more than is wanted, and it is found that excesses are often applied to other purposes than were intended.

*MR. GOSCHEN: In the case of a Civil Service Vote the amount cannot be transferred to another head of expenditure, but must, if in excess, simply be returned to the Exchequer.

DR. CAMERON: I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that if he asked for £3,900 only, that sum, in addition to the subscribed £2,000, would be more than is needed for the 40 families spoken of; and I only ask for an undertaking that any surplus shall not be applied to some other purpose. I would also suggest that the revival of the Committee of last year, if it is intended to deal with the subjects of emigration and migration, would be of more utility than the Committee now suggested. In fact, the cause of the Highland crofters would be simply lost if referred to the Committee proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which would prove to be only a convenient way of shunting a question which certain Members of the Government, especially political economists like the Chancellor of the Exchequer, are not at all enamoured of.

MR. CALDWELL (St. Rollox): I desire to point out that the population of the congested districts of the Western Highlands is put down at 27,000; and taking the number of families to be emigrated at 70, with an averge of five per family, the total number of persons emigrated would be only 350, which would not provide for the removal of the natural increase of the population, so that the district would in the future continue to be quite as much congested as it is now. Emigration on a large scale might do much to remedy the congestion now complained of, especially if it went beyond the natural increase of the population; but the proposal as it now stands would practically leave the state of things in the Highlands pretty much as at present.

*DR. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I should like to know whether the £2,000 spoken of has been provided?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: Yes; I stated so earlier in the evening.

Vote agreed to.

EGYPTIAN ACCOUNTS ADJUSTMENT.

4. Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £39,766, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1889, as a grant in aid of completing the Adjustment of Accounts between the British and Egyptian Governments."

*MR. GOSCHEN: Among other matters of account with the Egyptian Government is one arising from a reduction which was made in the interest on the purchase money of the Suez Canal shares, which was reduced from 5 to 4½ per cent. After a time the payment was resumed, and the Egyptian Government repaid the ½ per cent. and placed it again at the disposal of our Government. On the other hand, there were claims raised by the Egyptian Government, and a set-off was arranged of that money which had been repaid to us by the Egyptian Government against various claims upon us made by the Egyptian Government.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I wished to raise an important question as to whether the accounts with the Egyptian Government are to be squared at the expense of the British taxpayer; but under the circumstances I hope the Government will remember the amount of work we have done, and will consent to report Progress. I beg to move accordingly.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry to say we cannot consent to adopt this course. It is the general desire of the Committee that we should complete the Supplementary Estimates this evening, and I hope that my hon. Friend will withdraw his Motion.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Division): I think, perhaps, it would be a more convenient course if we discussed this matter on Report.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I know it is of no use dividing the House against the master of many legions, and I will, therefore, take the advice of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow.

Mr. PHILIP STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I hope that we shall have some assurance from the Government that a proper opportunity will be afforded the House of discussing the action of the British Government in relation to Egyptian Finance.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I understand that it is not intended to enter upon the Vote on Account for the Civil Service to-night.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The Civil Service Excess Votes raise a very important question as to the Divisional Magistrates. I hope the Government do not intend to press them through to-night.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: We shall be able, I think, to give a satisfactory explanation to the House on that subject.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Class III.

(5.) £123, Supplementary Land Registry.

*Mr. W. L. JACKSON: With the permission of the House, I will explain in a few words that when this Vote was submitted the other night, some objection was taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, in consequence of which it was withdrawn. I am now able to inform the House that the Vote does not involve any increased charge upon the Treasury, and I may say, as the right hon. Gentleman is not in his place, that I have explained the matter to him personally, and I think that if he had been here he would have been able to say that he was satisfied with the explanation. Something was said the other night about the amount of business transacted at the Land Registry. Now, there were 665 settlements registered there last year, and that involved a considerable amount of work; but Bills, which it is intended to lay before Parliament, will, if they become law, necessitate a considerable addition to the office. The fees have increased, and I am able to inform the Committee that, although the figures given are based on an estimate, they have been tested and fortified by actual experience. In the year 1888-9 the cost of the office was £2,796, and the receipts and fees amounted to £820, so that the net cost was £1,976. For the coming year we estimate that the cost of the office will be £3,400, and the estimated receipts £2,947, leaving a net cost of £453. But then, from that we ought to deduct £180, the salary of the clerk who has been transferred from the Supreme Court to the Land Registry, and that reduces the net cost to £273. I think it will be admitted I have carried out my promise, that there shall be no additional charge put on the Exchequer in connection with the transfer of a clerk. His place has, I believe, been abolished, and the figures I have given can be relied upon. I trust, therefore, that the Committee will be good enough to pass this Vote.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): It was stated last year that the staff of his office was excessive, and that there was not sufficient work to employ the clerks half their time. How is it, then, that the staff has been increased?

*MR. JACKSON: There has been no increase. There have been two deaths during the interval; one clerk who died received £400, and the other, who retired and died a week after, received £300.

MR. MOLLOY: At any rate, it was pointed out last year that there was scarcely any work for the staff of this office to do, and the excuse that the hon. Gentleman gave for keeping the office going was that further legislation was intended, which would involve the transfer of additional work; but, in my experience, that excuse has been held out for the last three years, and I must say that when the question comes up on the Estimates, we shall go into it thoroughly, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman will be prepared with some better and more valid excuse than the flimsy one he has given this evening.

Vote agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICES (EXCESSES).

(6.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £10,970 14s. 2d., be granted to Her Majesty, to make good Excesses on certain Grants for Civil Services, for the year ended on the 31st day of March, 1888."

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I certainly should have expected that some Member of the Government would have volunteered an explanation in regard to this Vote. It is an irregular Vote, intended to cover an illegality which has been exposed on more than one occasion by hon. Members on this side of the House, and if the Government insist on trying to get it passed to-night, we shall not only be assisting in covering an irregularity, but we shall be delaying discussion on two or three very burning questions which are likely to be raised in connection with this Excess Vote. Up to the present time we have had no explanation from any Member of Her Majesty's Government, and especially from that Member who is most directly responsible for the Vote, of the system under which the Court Valuers are appointed, or who recommends them, what are their qualifications, and what class of persons is appointed. From time to time, Mr. Courtney, in this House, hon. Members below the Gangway have had to protest against the manner in which the administration of the Land Acts in Ireland has been gerrymandered in the interests of the landlords, and I think this complaint is most glaring in connection with the appointment of Court Valuers. These Valuers have all been appointed under Section 32 of the Land Act of 1887, and they consist either of landlords themselves, or of near relatives of landlords, or of landlord's agents, and surely, when one remembers the long series of Land Acts which have been brought in for the pacification of Ireland, it might have been thought that if the Government had had the smallest particle of common sense—if they had recognized their duty to the country—they would have gone to any length, rather than have given the people of Ireland fair cause for suspicion that there was any partiality exercised by them in this matter. But, as a fact, they have gone to the other extreme. Notorious landlord partizans have been appointed to advise County Court Judges in the settlement of rent disputes. We were not aware that the Government would have had the temerity to bring on this Vote to-night, or we would have been prepared with particulars of the most glaring instances of partizanship in the administration of the Act. In consequence of the mal-administration of the Act, it brings no benefit to the people in whose interests it is supposed to have been passed, and I must say that the appointments of County Court Valuers have given rise to the strongest suspicions amongst the tenants that they have not been made impartially. Indeed, I would suggest that the appointments stand out as the most discreditable acts of the Administration. I have a list here of about 30 men, who have been appointed under the section, and I defy the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to point out any single one of them who possess the confidence of the tenantry in the north, south, east, or west of Ireland. I believe that one of the valuers so appointed is a brother-in-law of the hon. Gentleman who represents the landlords of South Tyrone. In my own district, a gentleman has been appointed who was always known as a notorious landlord's valuer; another valuer of Miltown Malbay is a well-known landlord, who, at the last Kilrush Quarter Sessions, served process for rent on one of his tenants because he had applied to the Court for relief, and this same valuer had acted for years as agent for his brother Then, again, an agent of Lord Clanricarde has been appointed, and is it possible to expect that the tenants will regard as fair rents which are fixed by men of this character? Again, we have Mr. George Trench, a cousin of one of the worst rack-renters in the county of Cork, and yet you are surprised that there are disturbances in that county—you are surprised that you have to send the police and military to assist the bailiffs in collecting the rents. It is perfectly understood that the County Court Judge, though he has a knowledge of the law, is not necessarily a good judge of land and able to fix the rents, and that is why power was given for the appointment of these valuers to assist him. But it was never intended that the valuers should be landlords, or their agents. Now our grievances are that we have never been able to get any information as to the grounds on which the appointments are made, the qualifications of the men appointed, and the system pursued in making the appointments, and I think, therefore, in view of what we consider to be the shameless partizan character of the appointments, we are justified in opposing this Vote.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I may say in the first place that the appointments are not made by the Government, but by the County Court Judge. The man appointed must be either a landlord, a landlord's agent, or a tenant, or he could have no sufficient knowledge of the land. That is my second point, and my third is that the tenants are not obliged to go into these Courts; it is optional for them to go before the Land Commission appointed under the Act of 1881. Now, I am not the author of the Act which gives this alternative tribunal, because I think alternative tribunals are open to objection.

MR. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman has stated that he is not the author of this particular system. But it strikes me that he is the author of it under section 32 of the Act of 1887, and yet he has the audacity to get up in this House and put the blame on the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, whereas it is in his own Act of Parliament that the provision is made for the appointment of valuers to aid the County Court Judges in performing the duties imposed on them by the Act. This conduct is characteristic of the right hon. Gentleman. He says in the balmiest way that he is not the author of the Act, yet here is the section in his own Act of Parliament. As a specimen of the right hon. Gentleman's administration I commend it to the notice of the country.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and learned Gentleman is under a misapprehension. Undoubtedly under the Act of 1881 the County Court Judges had the same jurisdiction, although it is perfectly true that power to appoint the valuers is given in the Act of 1887. I may add that my recollection is that the valuers are not appointed by the Lord Lieutenant.

MR. T. M. HEALY; Here again the right hon. Gentleman is wrong. When my hon. Friend the Member for Cork complained of the partizan character of these gentlemen, he got up and said, "They are not appointed under our Act, and I am not responsible for the Act of 1881." Upon that I quoted the section, to show that for the first time the court valuers were created under the Act of 1887, and then he says the Lord Lieutenant does not appoint them. But the Act says they are appointed subject to the approval of the Lord Lieutenant. Who is the Lord Lieutenant? Why, it is practically the Chief Secretary; for the Lord Lieutenant is always over here boat and horse racing. Will the right hon. Gentleman contradict that? I fear he may, for he would contradict the Twelve Apostles if they stood here. Notwithstanding his denial of responsibility, I repeat that the appointments are made subject to the approval of the Lord Lieutenant. I have no doubt, nevertheless, that despite this exposure of the inaccuracy of the right hon. Gentleman's statements, hon. Members will still go to their constituents, and praise the splendid, impartial, and manly administration of the right hon. Gentleman.

*Mr. W. A. M'ARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid., St. Austell): Notwithstanding that I always enjoy the little disputes between my hon. Friends from Ireland and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, I find that at 1 o'clock at night the enjoyment considerably diminishes. We have been here nearly 12 hours, we have to be here again at noon this day; and as the Government has done a fair amount of business, and as they cannot fairly say that public business has been obstructed, I beg to move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I hope the hon. Member will not press his Motion. We have made some progress, and we are most anxious that these Excess Votes should be disposed of. I hope we may be allowed to finish the small number of Votes that remain.

Mr. SEXTON: I trust the right hon. Gentleman will be willing to reconsider his decision. Only one of the several questions involved in the Excess Vote has been discussed, and he will surely recognize that from the nature of the controversy which has arisen between the hon. Member for North Longford and the Chief Secretary some time further must elapse before the point can be settled. Then there is the larger question behind of those hybrid functionaries—the Divisional Magistrates—who resemble more than anyone else the Governor of a Turkish province. I shall be obliged to raise the whole question as to the manner in which the salaries of these officials are being legalized. Surely the right hon. Gentleman cannot expect the Committee to sit more than half an hour or an hour longer, and as it is not within the bounds of possibility to explain our views on the question in so short a time, I think we had better adjourn now and begin afresh to-morrow.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I hope the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give way on this point. The Government possess a very remarkable power of prolonging debates, but we are prepared to sit as long as they like. The whole of this evening no Irish question has been discussed. I do say it is not fair to us and to the interests which we represent to take an important discussion like this after one o'clock at night. It cannot make much difference to the Government. They intend to get certain business through by Thursday night, and it cannot make much difference to them whether we rise an hour later or now. It does matter to us a great deal. At an earlier hour of the evening, the right hon. Gentleman taunted Scotch Members with talking in order to have their speeches reported in the Scotch newspapers. Well if the Scotch Members may do that, surely the Members of a much maligned and misrepresented Party ought not to be compelled to discuss Irish questions at an hour when they cannot be reported.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I wish it were in my power to accept the suggestion of the hon. Member. But we want the time. Right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench wish to discuss the Vote on Account, and the time we can give them is limited, so that I do not think it would be fair to them to leave over these subjects for to-morrow. The question of the appoint ment of valuers for instance, which has been debated, is one which ought to be discussed on the Vote itself and not on an Excess Vote. If questions of principle are to be raised on Excess Votes we shall never get through our business. Then, as to the question which the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin wishes to raise, it is merely a technical question, and I do appeal to hon. Members seeing that there is so much business to be taken to-morrow, to allow us to proceed with these Excess Votes. Hon. Members offer to go on to an unlimited time to-morrow, but the First Lord of the Treasury has stated he hopes the House will not sit long after 6 p.m.

*Mr. LANE (Cork, Co. E.): I wish to call attention to the fact that it is not merely Irish questions which are raised by this Excess Vote. Hon. Members representing English constituencies have waited for an opportunity to discuss other questions raised by this Vote. If we pass it now we shall be condoning a very grave irregularity against which the Public Accounts Committee have protested for the last four or five years. A Constitutional question is involved in this attempt to condone an illegality. Hon.

Members here are determined to discuss the question from a legal point of view. They want to know what right the Irish Law Officers of the Crown have to suggest to the Lords of the Treasury means by which they may evade the responsibility which the Government have incurred here year after year by promising to bring in a Bill to legalize payments which have been regularized by the Appropriation Act every year. Although the Government has introduced that Bill every year for five years they have never attempted to pass it, and the proposal now made is simply intended to do away with the necessity for passing the Bill. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer will find it more prudent and more conducive to the saving of the time of the House if he consents to this adjournment, for if he refuses the debate must necessarily be prolonged.

Mr. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer is under a complete misapprehension when he says this is a technical question. It is a question of substance and one of great importance, because certain salaries have been illegally paid during the last five years, and now it is sought to legalize them by simply changing the names of the officers. We are entitled on this Vote to question the nature of the offices held by these gentlemen, and the utility of the services which they perform. If the right hon. Gentleman intends to *clôture* the debate, I can only say it will be a rather uncommon step to take on a matter of such importance. It would also exasperate hon. Members, whereas by consenting to the adjournment the question might be satisfactorily disposed of in a short time to-morrow.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I think this Vote ought to have been brought on first in the evening. Now, for the first time for four years, we have an opportunity of discussing this important matter, it is not fair for the Secretary to the Treasury to put down this Vote at so late an hour, especially as he is the person who issued the Treasury Minute with respect to this unusual transaction, and as the Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee condemn it. I do not see why this Vote of £10,000 should not be put off to a later period of the Session, when it can be properly discussed. Remember that these gentlemen will get their salaries whatever the House does. If we lose this opportunity we shall not be able to raise the question on any other Vote, and therefore I ask the Government to withdraw it and bring it on later in the Session.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! Perhaps I may be allowed to intervene and make a statement which will clear up a little misapprehension as to the scope of the present Vote. This Excess Vote refers to the year ended the 31st of March, 1888. It comes on on the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee, and it is proposed to be taken, as is invariably done in these cases, after the Supplementary Estimates. The very important legal question which the hon. and learned Gentleman and the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin desire to raise can be properly discussed on the Estimates for the coming year, and cannot be properly raised on a Vote for the year ending March, 1888. The proper time to discuss it will be when the suggestion is acted upon, and comes into operation.

Mr. SEXTON: The point I desire to refer to is not so much the illegality of the course pursued. I wish to protest against the the payment of excess, and to convince the Committee that these offices should not continue to exist.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 41; Noes 121.—(Div. List, No. 29.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. SEXTON: I presume that the explanation promised by the Government with regard to this matter will be made, now that a debate is forced upon the Committee. Instead of having an Excess Vote, we are informed by the Comptroller and Auditor General that there ought to be a surplus of £300 upon this Vote. How has the excess of £700 arisen? It is because the Executive have used public money to make payments not allowed by law. It is because a certain class of Divisional Magistrates in Ireland have for five years been paid a high salary, which is illegal. I consider the existence of this class of public officials is opposed to the public interest. They are a kind of secret and irresponsible agents between the Government in Dublin Castle and the landlords and the forces of the

Crown. We find the Divisional Magistrates sometimes directing the movements of soldiers and police; at other times in command of them at evictions and public meetings; then directing a magisterial examination; and finally ordering what Magistrates shall proceed from one district to another in order to try certain cases. Now, I protest against their performing functions of a judicial character. I say that at times they have acted shamefully and unfairly. There is Mr. Cecil Roche, who tried Mr. Latchford, and who nominated a magistrate to try Mr. W. O'Brien, who had so severely held him up to public condemnation. Although the Committee of Public Accounts have year after year warned the Government that this payment was illegal, it has been continued. The Government, in these circumstances, might have lowered the salaries, or passed an Act to authorize the payment; but they take neither of those courses. They adopt, on the contrary, a course which is neither straightforward nor frank, and which is unprecedented. They seek to legalize the payment by simply changing the title of the Magistrate's office, while he continues to discharge the same duties and to enjoy the same salary. The Lord Chancellor, indeed, has been called in to the rescue, and now we are to have not a paid Divisional Magistrate, but a paid Justice of the Peace. The Lord Lieutenant has withdrawn the warrants held hitherto by these Divisional Magistrates; he has, in fact, disrobed them; but the Lord Chancellor, instead, is putting their names on the Commission of the Peace. What do Englishmen say to paid Justices of the Peace? There are, I know, paid Magistrates in England, but they derive their power from Statute Law. I think that these new officials may best be compared with the French Prefect; they are to be responsible to the Lord Lieutenant, and they in turn will have control over the resident magistrates, who are magistrates for all Ireland, while their superior officers can only exercise magisterial powers in limited districts. A more extraordinary and more ridiculous proposal never challenged the attention of the House than to give an official with inferior magisterial jurisdiction a higher salary and the control over magistrates having wider judicial powers. I protest strongly against the creation of this executive monster in order to escape from the effects of an illegality. I contend also that these offices are superfluous and constitute an evil.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down did not take the advice which was given from the Chair, to the effect that the more convenient time to discuss the legality or propriety of the course taken by the Government with regard to the status of the Commissioners was not the present occasion, but on the first occasion when a Vote is asked for for the payment of their salaries in the future. But as he refused to act on the suggestion, I am bound to deal with the arguments which he has put forward. He has said that we have acted illegally. Undoubtedly there has been an irregularity, commented upon year after year by the Public Accounts Committee; but to say that payments authorized by the House and passed through all the stages of a Vote afterwards embodied in a Bill are illegal seems to me to be a misuse of words. He has described the Commissioners as hybrid functionaries, half judicial and half executive. But he is mistaken; they are entirely executive; they have no judicial functions at all.

MR. SEXTON: Do they not direct what Resident Magistrates shall try cases under the Crimes Act?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: They may have done so, although the duty appertains rather to Dublin Castle. It is not, however, a judicial function; it is purely an executive act. The right hon. Gentleman complains we have not acted fairly in thus bringing the matter forward. But the Government have laid on the Table a Minute fully explaining the whole matter; and we cannot be fairly charged with any want of frankness in regard to it. The hon. Member is greatly exercised by the change which has been made in the functions of these officers; but that change is a purely technical, and not a substantial one, and it certainly need not and ought not to be made a sufficient reason for a long debate at this hour of the morning (five minutes to 2 o'clock), when so many other occasions must shortly arise on which the question might be raised, and raised, too, with far greater propriety than it can be now. Let me point out that Lord Spencer is the statesman to whom we owe the institution of this office; the officials were highly valued too by Mr. Forster, as no doubt they were by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle. I certainly do not the less value their services.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The right hon. Gentleman speaks of this as a very small matter which need not occupy much time. But as he has chosen to bring it on at this hour he must not blame us for seeking to have it adequately discussed. My chief complaint in the present business lies against Lord Ashbourne, who, sitting in the Court of Appeal, plays into the hands of the Government by the creation of these officials, and making them all Magistrates for a group of counties—one of the most unparalleled and scandalous acts ever done by a public functionary. As a matter of fact, these Magistrates have not even a local habitation in the ounties where they are in the Commision of the Peace. Remember the position which these men occupy. Mr. Forster, finding the country getting out of hand in the year 1881, devised means as he said of getting more into touch with it, and he at once created a number of gentlemen like Captain Plunket—this most malodorous man in the public nostril—and put them into these positions. Lord Spencer extended the system and really gave it to us in its present form. There was a famous Minute issued in the year 1882 about these gentlemen, dividing the whole country into divisions and placing each division under the charge of one of these officials. Under Mr. Forster they no doubt exercised magisterial functions, for Mr. Clifford Lloyd used to sit at Mallow and apply to the people brought before him the same law as he had been in the habit of administering to Belfast prostitutes—he bound them over to keep the peace. Then came the passing of the Crimes Act of 1882, at which time we got a promise that the executive offices and judicial offices should be separated. At that time it was never intended that the position of County Magistrates should be impinged upon. It was always considered that a County Magistrate was a person owning land in the county, or, at least, having some stake in it. But these Divisional Magistrates do not own land in any of the counties in which they are now to act. I really cannot see any change in their legal status. It is true that they have ceased to be Resident Magistrates, but to all intents and purposes they continue to exercise their former functions. What has been done after all is only a gross evasion of the law. ["No, no."] Well, if you do not like that term we will call it a novelty, and I will say that the last person who ought to start a novelty of this sort is the Keeper of the Queen's Conscience in Ireland—the Lord Chancellor. He is a high officer of State, and I suppose he is so called because he gets the high salary of £8,000 a year. But he is not like the English Lord Chancellor, because one of his duties is to sit in a Court of Law, and recently he had before him three or four appeals in which Resident Magistrates were concerned, and in each case he has given his decision in their favour The Lord Lieutenant, acting under the pressure of the Public Accounts Committee, deprived these Divisional Magistrates of the warrants under which they acted. Lord Ashbourne, being a Member of the Cabinet, would, it might be supposed, utterly disdain to be mixed up in a matter of this kind; but what does he do? He comes very promptly to the rescue of the Government, and these very men, from whom the Lord Lieutenant has withdrawn his warrant, he creates Justices of the Peace for groups of counties. What else does he do? Remember that not long since, because Mr. James Byrne travelled a few miles out of his own Petty Sessional district to adjudicate in a charge brought against a policeman of breaking a man's head—and in that case the defendant was fined ten shillings—Lord Ashbourne at once asked the Magistrate what business he had to go outside his Petty Sessional district, and when the authority of Lord O'Hagan was quoted for the Act the Lord Chancellor said that did not matter to him, and he dismissed Mr. Byrne from the Commission of the Peace. Well, this very Lord Chancellor goes and appoints Magistrates who are to act not merely just outside their own Petty Sessional districts, but for whole groups of counties. I believe, for instance, that Captain Slack is put on the Commission of the Peace for 12 different counties. Lord Ashbourne has the audacity, having removed Mr. Byrne from the Commission of the Peace for travelling 15 miles in his own county, to help the Government, like a lame dog, over the stile, and give these Divisional Magistrates very unusual and extended powers. The Home Secretary appears to find this very funny; no doubt he found it very funny when he admitted Pigott to see John Daly, but I do not think it desirable that the quips and cranks and wreathy smiles of the Home Secretary should be imported into this debate. Perhaps his only reason for laughing is because among the counties I mentioned as those over which Captain Slack had jurisdiction, was the County of Waterford, in which Dungarvan is situated, that being the constituency in which Mr. Pigott helped him to a seat in this House. Now, I say it is not right that, at this hour of the night, we should be compelled to challenge the conduct of the highest executive officer in this way. I can only repeat that the conduct of Lord Ashbourne in this matter has been unparalleled, un precedented, and most regrettable. We are told that these Divisional Magistrates do not exercise magisterial functions at all, but it is rather difficult to define what are judicial functions. Last year I questioned the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in reference to a charge brought against Mr. Latchford, a millowner and Justice of the Peace in Tralee, a man of moderate Nationalist opinions, who had got into a dispute with another magistrate, who was also a millowner, but who was not of Nationalist opinions. The dispute had reference to a right of water-way, and the men employed by each of the disputants took up the quarrel, with the result that there was something in the nature of a tipsy riot. Now, the Crimes Act was passed to deal purely with conspiracies and agrarian crimes and matters of that kind, but when a summons for riot was taken out against Mr. Latchford, Colonel Turner directed that he should be tried by Mr. Cecil Roche, with whom he had been in the habit of sitting on the Bench at Tralee, and from whose decisions he had found it necessary constantly to dissent in consequence of the harsh manner in which people were treated. Now, Mr. Roche hated this Magistrate with the natural hatred of a man who occupies a position in which he is paid a salary to be obnoxious to people—Mr. Roche being a man who, be it remembered, had been dismissed from the Land Commission for drunkenness—yet he was appointed to the position of a magistrate——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must ask the hon. and learned Gentleman to adhere to his argument, as he very well knows how to do.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Very well, Sir, I will keep my references to Mr. Roche for another occasion. What I wish to say is that it was a monstrous use of the Crimes Act to try Mr. Latchford under it for an offence arising out of a question as to water rights, and I think that Colonel Turner must certainly be considered to have exercised judicial powers when he directed such a trial. He also clearly exercised judicial powers when he chose the Magistrate who should preside at the trial. Now, I take issue upon this Vote, first in regard to the salaries paid to these officials, and, next, I take issue on the extraordinary bastard powers which are conferred upon them by the Lord Chancellor, and I venture to say that the people of Ireland cannot but condemn these wholesale payments in excess of the law, and also the manner in which the appointments are made.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I think that this is a Vote on which direct issue should be joined at the earliest possible moment. The Chief Secretary says in this matter concealment was impossible and frankness obligatory, and he therefore takes credit for frankness. But I venture to point out that when the Solicitor General for Ireland was recently questioned as to the reason for the change of names he gave a very different version to that now stated by the Chief Secretary. I do not see how their claim for frankness is well founded; I say that this is a violation of the Statute and not a mere irregularity. We have been told by the right hon. Gentleman that these officials do not exercise judicial functions. But the right hon. Gentleman well knows that they were appointed under the Act 6 and 7 William IV., c. 13, and when that Act was passed, only magistrates with judicial functions were contemplated. What becomes now of the frankness of the right hon. Gentleman? I wish the House to understand that the Government have year after year admitted the illegality of the sum charged in the Vote. A Treasury Minute to legalize the payment was issued on the 15th of February last, and now we are asked to consent to the retrospective effect of the Minute issued ten months after the end of the financial year in which the particular charge was made, in order to whitewash the Government. With these facts before it, is the House going to condone this illegality and irregularity simply because the Government have resorted to a certain device? Whether the device is sound enough to purge them of their illegality is a matter to be settled hereafter. I do not think the Committee should condone the illegality, and I, therefore, move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £1,118.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £9,852 14s. 2d., be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I really think we are entitled to be told under what circumstances Lord Ashbourne made these appointments. We have raised many important questions, and are entitled to have some explanation. We have pointed out, for instance, the unparalleled act of the Lord Chancellor in appointing as magistrates for groups of counties men who have not sufficient land to "sod a lark." I challenge the English Attorney General to quote a similar instance in England, and I do submit that we are entitled to some better defence of the Government action than we have yet heard.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I may point out that the hon. Member followed me after I had endeavoured to reply to all the arguments which had been brought forward up to that time, and now he complains that I did not answer his argument at once. The result of the change which has been made is that the area over which these magistrates have power has been diminished and not increased; and the magisterial functions of these gentlemen has a parallel in London, where the magistrates have jurisdiction over the whole of the Home Counties, extending, I believe, as far as Berkshire. As to whether the magisterial appointments were made by the Lord Chancellor or otherwise, that question appear to me to be utterly unworthy of serious attention on the part of the Committee.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I venture to suggest that the case of the London stipendiaries is not a parallel case to this. Sir James Ingham may have power over the Home Counties, but it is probably given him by statute, just as in the same manner the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary is by statute made a magistrate for the whole of Ireland. I say Lord Ashbourne ought not to interfere in any executive function in Ireland, because, as a Member of the Cabinet, being a Judge, he ought to keep himself clean and sweet from interference in these matters. Why, I ask, should Mr. Byrne be removed from the Commission of the Peace for acting just outside his Petty Sessional District, whilst the official who removed him appoints Captain Slack, with power to range at will over the whole Province of Leinster? That is a plain question which demands an answer.

***Mr. LANE**: Only last Friday I asked the Chief Secretary for the reason for the change of the name of these officials. He replied that it was a mere matter of form. The Solicitor General on being asked if there was any other reason for the change, said he was not aware of it. Why did he not give me the real answer then? I think we are fully entitled to discuss this Vote. It is not unusual for these Divisional Magistrates to appoint the Resident Magistrates to try cases under the Crimes Act, and then sit on the Bench beside them. I remember in the case of my own trial Captain Plunkett brought up to Cork a Resident Magistrate from the town of Bantry and another from Limerick, as he had good reasons for not selecting a magistrate in the immediate neighbourhood, and as I had subpœnaed himself as a witness he brought up Captain Slack to take charge of the troops outside the Court. Captain Slack, after conversation with Captain Plunkett, took his seat on the Bench by the side of the Resident Magistrates, until I was obliged to order him to leave the Bench. This shows clearly, Sir, that the Divisional Magistrates are not as represented by the Chief Secretary, merely executive, as distinct from judicial, functionaries. Captain Plunkett treated with contempt magistrates of Cork belonging to all political parties, who at two successive meetings called on him to direct the prosecution of a certain person. Why, he not only ignored the meetings to which he was invited, but he absolutely refused to order the prosecutions. Anyone who watches the conduct of these officials must come to the conclusion that they seem to think they are paid for no other purpose than to exasperate the people of Ireland into bloodshed and riot. Wherever Captain Plunkett has been he has been responsible for wanton and unnecessary sacrifice of life. It was in his division that O'Hanlon lost his life by being stabbed by his police in Youghal. It was in his division, and under his subordinates, the three men were shot in Mitchelstown. It was by his subordinate that Ahern was murdered in Midleton. Rioting follows his footsteps, and it is monstrous that we should be called upon to vote excess salaries to such men as Plunkett.

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH (Lancashire, Clitheroe): I do not think the Government should feel any surprise at the strength of the protest made on this occasion, when we consider, first, the course of events in Ireland under the administration of these Divisional Magistrates, and, secondly, the most exceptional irregularity which has occurred year after year in connection with the payment of their salaries—an irregularity which has been reported on by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee. Further than that there is the extreme peculiarity of the rather ingenious arrangement by which it is proposed to legalize the payments. It may be inconvenient to discuss the matter at this hour of the night, but after all it is the choice of the Government, as, if they had chosen to accept the Motion to report Progress, the subject could have been raised on a more convenient opportunity. As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee I feel bound to join in the protest made against this Vote, and I shall support the Motion for its reduction.

MR. SEXTON: The Government have endeavoured to amend the illegality of their position by a very curious method, but they have gained nothing whatever by it, as they will still be under the obligation to introduce a Bill in reference to the pensions of these gentlemen. Notwithstanding all the ingenuity employed by the Government on this occasion they will find themselves precisely in the same position. ["Divide" *and Cries of* "Order," and "Progress!"]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. SEXTON: I move to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

*MR. GOSCHEN: I hope the hon. Member will not persevere with his Motion. Hon. Members cannot complain that they have not been listened to. I must say that I think the hon. Member ought not at this time of the morning to be so susceptible to cries of "Divide."

MR. SEXTON: Then suppress your disorderly followers below the Gangway.

The Committee divided: Ayes 44; Noes 124; Majority 80.—(Div. List, No. 30.)

Question again proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £9,852 14s. 2d. be granted for the said service."

MR. SEXTON: I hope hon Members will now be willing to allow us to proceed without interruption. The hon. Gentleman the Recorder for Ashton-under-Lyne is not now in his place, and his absence will tend somewhat to the order of the debate. I was about to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland whether he will give a reply to the pertinent question put to him by my hon. Friend? We have a right to ask what has been the course of these transactions. Lord Londonderry and Lord Ashbourne would appear to have been in collusion—to use no harsher term. We ought to know when was this matter arranged? Did the suggestion proceed from the Judicial Officer or from the Executive? Did Lord Londonderry point out to Lord Ashbourne that they were stealing from the public purse and paying money they had no right to pay, or was it Lord Ashbourne who generously consented to come to the rescue of the Executive? How was it initiated? Did the eminent judicial person go to the Castle to help the Executive out of the difficulty, or was he asked to do so by Lord Londonderry? Did Lord Ashbourne fill up a number of Commissions of Justices of the Peace, or did Lord Londonderry take away the Resident Magistrates Commissions before Lord Ashbourne conferred those of Justices of the Peace? Did Lord Ashbourne move in the matter as a Member of the Cabinet or a Member of the Privy Council? Again, every Justice of the Peace is bound by law to pay a fee of £6 on receiving his commission. We have been told that the Divisional Magistrates have had batches of commissions given out to them, some getting six and others 12. Have they paid the £6 fee on each; and, if not, how has the law been evaded? Let us be certain about these things, and let us see that there have been no breaches of the law. Let me also ask, were these affairs conducted *vivâ voce* as between Lord Londonderry and Lord Ashbourne, or in writing? We know there have been important negotiations between Government agents and dynamitards, which, doubtless, have not been submitted to paper; but as between Lord Londonderry and Lord Ashbourne there must have been correspondence. Who was the first to write, and will the Government be willing to lay the correspondence on the Table, and thus communicate it to those who have to vote the needed money?

MR. MADDEN: But with regard to the question which was put to me on the subject, I may say that my answer related solely to the change in the title from Divisional Magistrate to Divisional Commissioner. This change is quite distinct from the root of the question, and does not affect the position of the present officials with regard to the Public Accounts Committee. The questions put to me by the hon. Gentleman as to what has passed between other persons I am not in a position to answer.

*MR. GOSCHEN rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 121; Noes 43.—(Div. List, No. 31.)

Question put accordingly, "That a sum, not exceeding £9,852 14s. 2d., be granted for the said Service."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 46; Noes 120.—(Div. List, No. 32.)

*MR. GOSCHEN claimed "That the Original Question be now put."

Original Question put accordingly.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 120, Noes 44.—(Div. List, No. 33.)

Ordered, "That a sum, not exceeding £10,970 14s. 2d., be granted to Her Majesty, to make good Excesses on certain Grants for Civil Services, for the year ended on the 31st day of March, 1888."

Resolutions to be reported, and Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Four o'clock in the morning.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 3.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [March 28.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 20th March, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

IRELAND—ALLEGED OBSTRUCTION OF THE POLICE.

Mr. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the cases of seamen who were recently sentenced by the Resident Magistrates at Ballaghaderrin, County Mayo, Petty Sessions, to imprisonment for a month and a day for alleged obstruction of the police in the discharge of their duty at Lissacal, County Roscommon, and who served formal notices of appeal to the next Quarter Sessions for the Division, which take place at Athlone on the 22nd instant, can be tried at a more convenient place than Athlone, which is at the opposite end of the County to that in which the defendants reside, being nearly 50 miles distant; whether he is aware that there will also be Quarter Sessions at Castlerea on the 29th March for the same Division of the County, which is only seven miles from the defendants; and, whether, in view of the fact that the defendants are too poor to defray the expense of travelling to and attending at Athlone, he will consent to a postponement of the cases from Athlone to Castlerea Quarter Sessions on the 29th instant?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, Dublin University): I have communicated with the Attorney General on the subject, and I am informed that the matter is under consideration. I am not at present able to give an exact answer as to what will be done. The decision, however, will rest with the Attorney General, to whom I have communicated the facts.

RICHARD PIGOTT.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date did Richard Pigott get permission to visit John Daly in Chatham Prison; when did he pay the visit; was it in presence of warders; and, if not, why not; when had any previous visit been paid to Daly; was the Home Office consulted about, or made aware of, Pigott's visit; how did Daly communicate to Pigott how that he wished to see him; how did he obtain Pigott's address; was Daly entitled to write a letter and receive a visit from Pigott under the prison rules; and, was there any correspondence on the subject at the Home Office?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): Richard Pigott got permission to visit John Daly, at Chatham Prison, on the 12th November, 1888. He paid the visit on the 3rd December, 1888, in the presence of Major Clayton, the Deputy Governor of the prison. Daly had been previously visited on the 27th October, 1888, by Mr. Soames, who applied on the 15th October for permission to see Daly, for the purposes of the Parnell Commission. Daly received a visit from Pigott by permission of the Directors of Convict Prisons to visit Daly on private business. Daly was entitled to a visit under the rules, and on being informed of Pigott's application he expressed a wish to be allowed to see him, and permission was accordingly sent to Pigott. Daly did not obtain Pigott's address, but he was allowed to write a letter and to receive a visit about the time that Pigott saw him. The correspondence on the subject was with the Directors of Convict Prisons.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Were Mr. Soames's visit and Mr. Pigott's visit both within the period prescribed by the rules?

Mr. MATTHEWS: A convict is allowed to write a letter and receive a visit once every three months. Mr. Soames's visit was out of the ordinary course, because it was a solicitor's visit, in a manner that I have explained more than once to the House.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to lay before the House the correspondence between Mr. Soames and the authorities who gave permission for the visit?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. and learned Gentleman refers to Mr. Soames's letter of application?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Yes.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I will read Mr. Soames's application, if that will answer the purpose. It is dated the 15th of October, and is as follows:—

> "Sir,—I beg to apply on behalf of the Defendants in the action of 'O'Donnell v. Walter,' and for the purposes of the Parnell Commission, for an order permitting me to interview John Daly and Gallagher, convicts under sentence of penal servitude for dynamite outrages, and without the usual supervision of a warder."

Upon that application permission was given to Mr. Soames to see Daly, but not otherwise than in the presence of the Deputy Governor.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Did he also see Dr. Gallagher?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I believe he did. He saw Gallagher on the same day.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Did the Deputy Governor make any note of the conversation which took place between Dr. Gallagher, John Daly, Mr. Soames, and Richard Pigott; did he make a Report to the Home Office; and are the Reports available to Members of this House?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I have no doubt the Deputy Governor did make a Report direct either to his superior or to the Director of Convict Prisons. If the hon. Member puts his question on the Paper I will consider it.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): The other day the right hon. Gentleman drew a distinction between a warder being present at an interview with a prisoner and being within hearing. Was the Deputy Governor within hearing at these interviews?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes; I think he was.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether Dr. Gallagher and John Daly were informed in advance of the intention of the *Times* solicitor to visit them, and did they accede to the visit?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I must ask for notice of that question.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is it to be clearly understood that the solicitors for the other side are to be allowed the same freedom of access to prisoners in a convict prison?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: The same treatment and the same method of action will be adopted precisely with all solicitors who apply on any legitimate business to see prisoners.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS, 1883-6.

Return ordered—

"Of cases in which objections were lodged against Provisional Orders issued by the Local Government Board for Ireland, the grounds of the objection in each case, and the decision of the Lord Lieutenant in Council; also showing the dates of the sitting of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and the Members of the Committee present—

Poor Law Union.
Name of Objector.
Grounds of Objection.
Decision of Privy Council.
Date of Decision.
Members of Committee of Privy Council present.

(in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 139, of Session 1887)."—(*Mr. P. Fitzgerald.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

Supply—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £3,729,203, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, viz.:—

CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS I.

Great Britain :—

	£
Royal Palaces	5,000
Marlborough House	600
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens ..	12,000
Houses of Parliament	6,000
Public Buildings	20,000
Admiralty, Extension of Buildings ..	500
Furniture of Public Offices.. ..	3,000
Revenue Department Buildings ..	35,000
County Court Buildings	5,000
Metroplitan Police Courts	3,000
Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland ..	3,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom ..	40,000
Science and Art Department Buildings	3,000
British Museum Buildings ..	2,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings ..	3,000
Harbours, &c., under Board of Trade	2,000
Lighthouses Abroad	1,000
Peterhead Harbour	5,000
Caledonian Canal	1,000
Rates on Government Property (Great and Ireland)	80,000
Metropolitan Fire Brigade ..	2,500

Ireland : —

Public Works and Buildings ..	35,000
Science and Art Buildings, Dublin..	7,000

CLASS II.

England :—

House of Lords, Offices	6,000
House of Commons, Offices ..	6,000
Treasury, including Parliamentary Counsel	10,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments	15,000 10,000
Foreign Office	10,000
Colonial Office	6,000
Privy Council Office and Subordinate Departments	6,000
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments	20,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Charity Commission (including Endowed Schools Department) ..	6,000
Civil Service Commission	7,000
Exchequer and Audit Department ..	9,000
Friendly Societies, Registry ..	1,500
Land Commission for England ..	2,000
Local Government Board	27,000
Lunacy Commission	2,000
Mint (including Coinage)	20,000
National Debt Office	2,500
Patent Office	9,000
Paymaster General's Office.. ..	4,000
Public Works Loan Commission ..	1,500
Record Office	4,000
Registrar General's Office	8,000
Stationery Office and Printing ..	70,000
Woods, Forests, &c. Office of ..	6,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	8,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid	15,000
Secret Service	6,000

Class IV.

England :—

	£
Public Education	780,000
Science and Art Department (United Kingdom)	45,000
British Museum	27,000
National Gallery	3,000
National Portrait Gallery	500
Learned Societies (United Kingdom)	6,500
London University	3,000
Universities and Colleges (Great Britain)	1,000

Ireland : —

Lord Lieutenant's Household ..	1,000
Chief Secretary's Office	7,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests	300
Local Government Board	15,000
Public Works Office	10,000
Record Office	1,000
Registrar General's Office	3,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey ..	6,000

CLASS III.

England :—

Law Charges	12,000
Criminal Prosecutions	75,000
Supreme Court of Judicature ..	65,000
Railway and Canal Commission ...	2,000
Wreck Commission	2,000
County Courts	20,000
Land Registry	1,000
Revising Barristers, England ..	3,000
Police Courts (London and Sheerness)	10,000
Police, England and Wales ..	115,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain	80,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	6,000

Scotland : —

Lord Advocate, and Law Charges ..	10,000
Courts of Law and Justice ..	5,000
Register House Departments ..	6,000
Crofters Commission	1,000
Police, Counties and Burghs (Scotland)	1,000
Prisons, Scotland	15,000

Ireland :—

Law Chargesand Criminal Prosecutions	15,000
Supreme Court of Judicature ..	12,000
Court of Bankruptcy	1,500
Admiralty Court Registry	200
Registry of Deeds	3,000
Registry of Judgments	400
Land Commission	20,000
County Court Officers, &c. ..	18,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police, &c. ..	30,000
Constabulary	300,000
Prisons, Ireland	20,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools	30,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum	1,500

Scotland :—

Secretary for Scotland	2,000
Exchequer and other Offices ..	500
Fishery Board	3,000
Lunacy Commission	1,200
Registrar General's Office	1,000
Board of Supervision	3,000

Scotland :—

Public Education	150,000
Universities, &c.	2,000
National Gallery	400

Ireland;—	£
Public Education	200,000
Teachers' Pension Office	500
Endowed Schools Commissioners ..	200
National Gallery	300
Queen's Colleges	500
Royal Irish Academy	100

Class V.

Diplomatic Services	60,000
Consular Services	40,000
Slave Trade Services	6,000
Suez Canal (British Directors) ..	400
Colonies, Grants in Aid	6,000
South Africa and St. Helena ..	14,000
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies ..	14,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid	- -

Class VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	12,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	1,000
Pauper Lunatics, Scotland	- -
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	65,000
Hospitals and Infirmaries, Ireland ..	3,000
Savings Banks and Friendly Societies Deficiency	- -
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain ..	500
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Ireland	600

Class VII.

Temporary Commissions	8,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	4,000
Total for Civil Services	£3,059,203

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.	£
Customs	100,000
Inland Revenue	100,000
Post Office	100,000
Post Office Packet Service	20,000
Post Office Telegraphs	350,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£670,000
Grand Total..	£3,729,203

Sir. G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I rise for the purpose of moving the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £500, being part of the salary of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The CHAIRMAN: The junior Member for Northampton (Mr. Bradlaugh) has given notice of an Amendment to reduce the salary of the Home Secretary, which will come before that of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell).

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have an Amendment to propose which will come before that of my hon. Friend and Colleague.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member did not give it to me.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: My Amendment is to reduce the Vote for Royal Palaces by £1,000. It is really too bad that these sums should be voted and the main question put off until the end of the Session, when we are afforded no opportunity of discussing the Estimates. The first Vote in Class 1 is £34,238 for the Royal Palaces, and we are now asked to vote £5,000 on account. We have a considerable number of Royal Palaces in the occupation of Her Majesty; other palaces partly in the occupation of Her Majesty, and also a large number of palaces which do not appear to be in any way occupied by Her Majesty. They are called palaces, but are really houses, such as Hawthorn Lodge, Hawthorn Cottage, Waglands, and others. I understand that they are granted by Her Majesty to friends. I do not complain of the way in which they are granted; but my objection is that every year we should be called upon to vote a considerable sum for keeping up these different houses. For my part, I should be glad to see them all sold and the money paid into the Consolidated Fund. That, however, is a large proposal which I cannot raise upon these Estimates. Nevertheless, I have a right to raise this point, that when these houses are granted, those to whom they are given should be called upon to keep them up and pay for the necessary repairs. When a man takes a house he frequently does so on a repairing lease, and it would be very little to ask that that principle should be pursued in this case. I always have protested against this Vote, and I always intend to protest against it. There is another item in the Vote which I have also protested against—the item for Hampton Court Stud House. Here we have £405 for maintenance, repairs and furniture in connection with Hampton Court Stud House. Last year we spent £415. The keeping up of this Stud House appears to be a most expensive thing, and I have never yet discovered, although I have asked year after year, what becomes of our foals. The foals are sold; somebody gets the money; but I have never yet seen in any sort of way that the country which keeps up the Stud House is credited with the price realized by the produce of the mares that are kept there. Under these circumstances I beg to move that the Vote for Royal Palaces be reduced by the sum of £1,000.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Item of £5,000, for Royal Palaces, be reduced by £1,000."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes 38; Noes 71.—(Division List, No. 34.)

Original Question again proposed.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): The reduction which I wish to move is a specific reduction of the sum of £200, being two months' salary of the Chief Inspector of Factories, and also of a further sum of £280.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I am sorry to interrupt my hon. Friend, but I am afraid that we should not be able to discuss the remaining Votes in Class 1 if we proceed now to discuss the Votes in Class 2.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member must be aware that if any action is taken in regard to Class 2, the Committee cannot go back again upon Class 1.

MR. T. M. HEALY: As the Secretary to the Treasury is in his place, I wish to learn from him whether there is any precedent for a Vote of this size being taken at this period of the Session?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The total amount now asked for follows the precedent of previous years, and represents an expenditure of about two months. When I say that it represents the expenditure of about two months, I do not mean to say that it represents one-sixth of the whole expenditure. Hon. Members will see that that is not so, because there are certain payments which come in quarterly, and, therefore, the payments for the first quarter are larger than they are at some other periods of the year. The main cause of the total of the Vote exceeding one-sixth of the total Estimates is due to the fact that the education payments are much larger in April than they are at some other periods of the year. It will be seen that the amount taken for education represents about one-fourth of the whole, while the amount for the Science and Art Department represents less than one-sixth, on account of the payments not coming in so early. But some of the other Votes represent considerably more than one-sixth—such as that for Criminal Prosecutions—nearly the whole of which is required to be paid early in the year. The same thing applies to the rates on Government property and the Mint, and to some other items, although to a less extent—such as the Consular Services, where the salaries are paid quarterly, and the superannuation retiring allowances, which, to a great extent, are also paid quarterly. I can assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that former precedents have been strictly followed.

MR. T. M. HEALY: What are the precedents?

MR. JACKSON: I cannot give precedents for the amount, but only for the period. It was formerly the custom to take a three or four months' Supply. That was objected to, and the period has been since reduced to a two months' Supply. No objection has ever been raised to the taking of a two months' Supply on the first Vote on Account.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I assume that it will be necessary to come to the House for another Vote on Account within two months of the present date?

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I should like to ask a question as to what is going on in Westminster Hall, which I imagine comes under the head of Houses of Parliament. I feel bound to protest against the unsightly steps which are being placed on one side of Westminster Hall. I think the First Commissioner of Works will himself allow that they will entirely destroy the effect of that great hall, and therefore I wish to ask him under what circumstances their construction has been sanctioned?

SIR W. HARCOURT: There is another question I should like the right hon. Gentleman to answer. He and I were upon the Committee which sat the year before last upon the new buildings for the Admiralty and War Office. The old plan was set aside and a new plan adopted. One of the great inducements was that it was extremely important the offices of the Admiralty should be reconstructed within a short period, and one of the requirements was that the new Admiralty should be finished within three years. It does not appear to me that anything has been done on that subject, and I should be glad to learn what the prospects are of the work being completed within the three years.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): There is a matter connected with the Royal Palaces which I wish to bring under the notice of the First Commissioner of Works. The area inclosing the Royal Gardens at Buckingham Palace is one for which no parallel can be found in any other country in Europe. Neither in Berlin, nor Vienna, nor in any other capital with which I am acquainted, is there anything of this nature. There are something like 50 acres of land in the centre of the greatest capital of the world which are practically unutilized and seldom used by the Sovereign. It is never seen by Her Majesty's subjects, and I think, without detracting from its advantages as a Crown residence in London, that a large portion of this area might be thrown open to the people of this country. I believe that that is a feeling which is very widely entertained. I have no desire to say one word which could be deemed disrespectful in regard to Her Majesty, nor have I any wish to see Buckingham Palace rendered a less desirable residence, but I think that a portion of this large area might be rendered available for the people generally.

*MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I should be glad to learn from my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works what the approximate cost would be of completing the statuary at the north entrance to Westminster Hall. That of the south entrance has been completed, and it is a pity that the rest should remain unfinished. I also wish to know how it is proposed to complete the angle of the road opposite Henry VII.'s Chapel? Is it proposed to carry the railing up to the St. Stephen's entrance to this House, or what is to be done? I will also ask whether it will not be possible next year to put down in the Estimates a sufficient sum to complete the Mosaics in the great Central Lobby? When we have spent four millions of money over these splendid Houses of Parliament I think it is a very great mistake to leave them unfinished. Then, again, is it not possible to put down a sufficient sum of money to fill the northern window of Westminster Hall with stained glass? To leave this noblest of civic halls unfinished for the sake of a few thousand pounds is certainly discreditable to this country. I do not suppose that I have the power of converting the Radical Party opposite, whose special prerogative it is to pose as economists, but it does seem to me that there can be no adequate reason why these necessary completions of improvements, already carried out, should not be perfected.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I have no wish to embarrass the right hon. Gentleman; but I should like to know the intentions of the Government with regard to the ugly shed in Palace Yard under which Members' horses are allowed to take exercise? If the Government have any desire to sell it cheap, it seems to me that it would be much more in place in some of the Cheshire salt-works.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): I may tell my hon. Friend the Member for Leicestershire (Mr. de Lisle) and other hon. Members that it is not possible at once to carry out all the improvements which we may think desirable in this House, or in any of the other public buildings under our charge; and I cannot undertake to put into the Estimates for the coming year the sum named by my hon. Friend. With regard to the statuary, I will have a calculation made, and will give my hon. Friend the information for which he asks. As to Buckingham Palace Gardens, this is the first time I have ever heard it suggested that they should be dealt with except as private gardens connected with the Palace. At the present time they form a great breathing and open-air space in a very important part of the Metropolis. I am not prepared to recommend that these private gardens should be dealt with in the way suggested by the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Munro Ferguson). With reference to the Admiralty buildings, some delay was caused in the autumn on account of the suggestions which came from the Admiralty as to the additional requirements which they thought were necessary. Then, again, greater difficulties arose with respect to the foundations than we were prepared for; but those difficulties would also have applied equally to the alternative plan. The operations are still going on, and are, as far as the foundations are concerned, nearly completed. We hope, before long, to be able to press the matter further. With regard to the steps in Westminster Hall, I have to say that what we have done has been done entirely in pursuance of the decision which was come to by the Committee of this House. The hon. Member will find all the information he wants in the Report of the Committee.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: With all deference to the authority the right hon. Gentleman quotes, I cannot but regard this as an excrescence. I cannot believe that steps such as these ever existed in this noble hall, and I cannot but express my great regret that any Committee was ever found to approve a plan for such a disfigurement. As I passed through the Hall and saw these steps they seemed to me more like a temporary structure for election purposes than anything applicable to this noble interior. I think we ought to mark our sense of this disfigurement by taking a Division on a reduction of the Vote. I will not move it now, however, for I believe my hon. Friend near me has a reduction to propose.

MR. R. C. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith): In connection with this Vote I wish to call attention to the grounds of Buckingham Palace and to the large space that is surrounded by a very high wall and *chevaux-de-frise* on the top. A large open space is thus withheld from the sight of the people of London. One hears a good deal of the large spaces that are jealously inclosed in different parts of the country, so inclosed that people cannot enjoy the beauty of the land, but I know of no case where it is more desirable to have the full benefit of an open space than in regard to this garden. Besides the size and character of this inclosure, be it remembered, the road down Constitution Hill is not open for traffic, and this is a great inconvenience to those who, having to proceed from one part of London to another, have to make a wide detour round this park and garden. To call attention to this subject I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £500 in regard to Buckingham Palace.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item of £5,000, for Royal Palaces, be reduced by £500, for the Garden of Buckingham Palace."—(*Mr. Munro Ferguson.*)

*MR. D. R. PLUNKET: From many statements that are made on this subject, it might be supposed by persons unacquainted with London and the circumstances that this palace and garden comprised land that had been inclosed by a monstrous invasion of public rights. It has, however, been explained already that this space has always been recognized as the private garden of the Sovereign. I may also point out that the garden is placed close to one of the largest parks in the Metropolis, so it cannot be said that this part of London suffers from any want of open space.

MR. R. C. MUNRO FERGUSON: I intended to make a comparison between this and such country seats as are scattered all over the country inclosed in such a private manner that it is impossible for inhabitants of the neighbourhood to derive any advantage from them. I might refer the right hon. Gentleman to many Royal Gardens in Continental capitals where no such seclusion is maintained, and where inclosure is so arranged that the inhabitants can enjoy a view of the garden. In the case of Buckingham Palace Garden you see nothing but a high blank wall, and it is impossible to derive the least enjoyment from the garden. In fact, this space is practically lost to the people of London.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Many hon. Members will remember, or at any rate they will see from old prints and plans, that in times gone by a high wall ran all round St. James's Park. This was a usual feature in olden times until, under more enlightened ideas, the walls were levelled to the ground. There is not the least intention in any sort of way to intrude on the privacy of Her Majesty; and, besides, it is very seldom that Her Majesty occupies Buckingham Palace. Now, in Paris, even during the Empire, the greater part of the gardens of the Tuileries was open to the public, a small portion being cut off and reserved for the use of the Imperial Family. So, it seems to me, a small portion of Buckingham Palace Gardens might be reserved, and during the residence of Her

Majesty in the Palace the public might be excluded from the whole of the gardens. Considering how infrequent and brief Her Majesty's visits there are, there surely is no need for this high surrounding wall. My hon. Friend has referred to another point, that if you cut off a large space by this garden, there is all the more reason why Constitution Hill should be thrown open to the public. It cannot be said that exclusion here is maintained to secure the privacy of the garden, because carriages do absolutely pass before Buckingham Palace; and yet, by some old, obsolete rule, they are prevented from passing along Constitution Hill. Last year, it may be remembered, I raised this point, and asked for a list of the persons privileged to drive here. I sometimes walk along the road, and I meet somebody driving in a carriage whom I presume is some grandee; but, as one of those who help to pay for the maintenance of the road, I ask why this grandee should be allowed to drive along it, while I am not allowed to do so in a cab or other humble vehicle that inferior people use. I hope my hon. Friend is going to divide, because it is not only the question of Buckingham Palace Garden—on which I can understand there may be much difference of opinion—but it includes the question of the exclusion of the public from Constitution Hill.

*Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, West): Last year, on the same occasion as that referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton, I put a question to the right hon. Gentleman as to the exclusion of the public from Constitution Hill during Her Majesty's absence from town. I got no answer, but perhaps I may be more successful now. Why should not Constitution Hill be thrown open during the absence of Her Majesty from town? If there is any real objection, what is it?

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I hope this reduction will meet with the strongest support—it is a protest against these grounds being reserved merely for a number of officials. It is simply this, and no question of intruding on the privacy of Her Majesty. Her Majesty does not make use of the garden; it is simply kept up for the use of the people employed at the Palace, and would, I think, be put to better use if dedicated to the use of the public.

Dr. FARQHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): May I ask what are the special qualifications to get on the list of those who are allowed to drive down Constitution Hill? I think that Members of this House might *ex officio* have a claim. I remember on one occasion I was proceeding in a private carriage to attend a *levée* of our gracious Sovereign when I was stopped at the gate and told in a very autocratic way that I could not pass because I was not on the list. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me what are the qualifications required, and perchance I may make application?

*Mr. D. R. PLUNKET: Before these interrogations proceed further, may I be allowed to say that I must decline to be led now into arguing the question of Constitution Hill? That would occupy too much time. It will be time enough to take up the subject on the regular Estimates. Of course, I am anxious to answer questions, and as a matter of fact, since this question was raised last year, the list of those who have the right to make use of Constitution Hill has been revised. I cannot carry the names in my head, but I will take care that this revised list is made accessible.

*Mr. CAUSTON: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question—Why should not Constitution Hill be open during the absence of Her Majesty from town? I must press for an answer, and from time to time, until I get one, I shall have to worry the right hon. Gentleman on the subject.

Dr. FARQUHARSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say if Members of Parliament may *ex officio* be placed on the list?

*Mr. R. D. PLUNKET: What I have undertaken to do is to provide the information who are on the list.

Dr. FARQUHARSON: And the qualifications.

Mr. A. ELLIOT (Roxburgh): Before we go to a Division, I should like to say that while I deprecate the view taken by the hon. Member for Leith respecting the gardens, I do not conceive there would be any intrusion on the privacy of Her Majesty's use of the gardens if the public had the right to use Constitution Hill. Instead of enlarging the list of privileged persons, I think it would be better to throw the Hill open entirely.

*MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I shall give my vote in favour of the reduction, because I think we should follow the example which is set, I believe, in all other European capitals, and have these gardens open to the enjoyment of the public during the time the Sovereign is not in residence. There would then be no intrusion on the enjoyment of the gardens by Her Majesty. The gardens are, in fact, now kept up for the advantage of a few officials. I also object to Constitution Hill, maintained by the public money, being reserved for the use of a few Lords, Germans, and other "swells."

THE CHAIRMAN: I must point out to the Committee the item proposed to be reduced is for Royal Palaces, and Buckingham Palace comes within that Vote; Constitution Hill comes under the head of Royal Parks.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 62; Noes 135.—(Div. List, No. 35.)

Original Question again proposed.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I wish to appeal to hon. Gentlemen with reference to the discussion of this Vote. There was a distinct understanding that right hon. Gentlemen opposite desired to make serious charges against the Government; and we were most anxious to meet those charges now on the Vote on Account. An hour and ten minutes has now been occupied in discussing items in Class 1, which in ordinary course will be considered in Committee of Supply within the next two or three weeks. The course that has been adopted is absolutely without precedent; and the only result must be seriously to delay public business and to deny us an opportunity of meeting those charges which I understand right hon. Gentlemen wish to make. I protest as clearly and distinctly as I can against the sacrifice of public time. Precedents are being created by the House of Commons which are absolutely destructive of its power and authority, which tend greatly to diminish its influence, and which, unfortunately, create a condition of things tending to the destruction of its authority with the country, and to a curtailment of the privileges of Members.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle): I do not wish to enter into controversy with the right hon. Gentleman as to who it is who is doing most to set precedents; but so far as my memory goes there was nothing like an understanding come to yesterday afternoon that no subjects should be discussed on the Vote on Account excepting Votes relating to the government of Ireland and to transactions connected with the Special Commission. On the contrary, I believe that the course taken by my right hon. Friend yesterday was that we wanted more time than the Government were willing to give us in order that the discussion on the Vote on Account might cover the whole ground, as discussions on Votes on Account are wont to do. So far as my experience goes, discussions on Votes on Account have never been limited to one particular branch of Supply. Therefore, I cannot accept the doctrine laid down by the right hon. Gentleman or his account of the understanding arrived at yesterday. At the same time, I fully agree with him that we desire to waste no time; and I do not think the last hour has been misspent, as every subject raised was one for legitimate discussion. However, we shall do what we can to expedite discussion; and I am prepared at the earliest moment to enter upon a discussion of the important Votes in Class 2; but there are, I believe, one or two important points to be elucidated before we arrive at that stage. When we obtain the information, which we may do in a few minutes, I am prepared to go on.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I have some questions to raise on Class II, but, notwithstanding the imputations of the right hon. Gentleman, there are some points on Class I. that may be raised, and I do not think that an hour is too large an expenditure of time upon such a large sum of money. I never heard of the Vote being passed in so short a time, and the attempt to fix a charge of obstruction upon us has no foundation. I have some questions to ask the Home Secretary.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: If the right hon. Gentleman will allow me, I have an Amendment on Class II, but I do not know whether it comes first in order. It has relation to Factory Inspectors.

Sir W. HARCOURT: My observations would come first as relevant to the salary of the Secretary of State.

*The **CHAIRMAN**: In point of procedure there is no distinction within the item for the Home Office between the salary of the Secretary of State and other details, this being a Vote on Account. The hon. Member for Northampton has given notice of an Amendment, and he is entitled to come first if he chooses.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: May I ask, if the hon. Member for Northampton moves a reduction, will that not shut out discussion on previous items?

*The **CHAIRMAN**: It will shut out discussion of previous items, as I have said.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I understand that we can discuss any of the sub-heads of the Vote relating to the Home Office and subordinate Departments.

*The **CHAIRMAN**: In this, a Vote on Account, there is no precedence among the sub-heads of any item, and the Home Office is taken as a whole. At the same time, the Notice on the Paper has precedence if the hon. Member claims it.

*Mr. **BRADLAUGH**: I give way to the right hon. Gentleman.

Sir. W. HARCOURT: Now there are some important circumstances which have arisen—I hope the Chief Secretary is not going, for some of the questions I have to raise affect him—there are some important questions to be raised with reference to the relations of the Secretary of State to the administration of prisons and the administration of the police. By the Prisons Act of 1877 the Home Secretary is the prison authority, and the Commissioners of Prisons are his assistants, not only with regard to the ordinary prisons, but still more with regard to convict prisons. Therefore the person immediately and directly responsible for the administration of prisons in this country is the Home Secretary. We were told that it was not in Ireland in the Department of the Chief Secretary, but I think that was a mistake. I think that in Ireland as in England the control that here is under the Home Secretary is there in the hands of the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary will recognize the fact that the prisons are under his direct control and orders, the Commissioners being appointed "to assist him in the discharge of his duty." Some remarkable circumstances have occurred upon which I think we should have some further information. There is probably no department of prison administration which has more important, and I might say more delicate, functions to perform than the medical department. The medical officers, like the chaplain, ought to be more or less the friends of the prisoners. They are the people who are there to mitigate any harshness in a case where the physical conditions of a prisoner require such mitigation. There is no subject which demands more constant attention on the part of the Secretary of State than that of the medical department, and I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman must be aware that none has engaged more constantly the attention of those who have held his office. Personal vestigation has been given in every case where any undue harshness has been alleged, and the Prisons Department is full of Minutes by Secretaries of State themselves with regard to their investigation of all such details. It is, therefore, the duty of the Secretary of State to consider the matter when a medical officer takes a step which is certainly a breach of the rules of the Home Department. I will not raise now—although it may have to be raised on the Vote for the salary of Dr. Barr—the question of the character of that document. It has been stated by the Secretary of State that there was some justification for this proceeding, in that attacks had been made elsewhere upon Dr. Barr, but I do not remember that the Secretary of State used that argument in connection with the censure passed upon Sir C. Warren, which led to that officer resigning the post of Chief Commissioner of Police. No doubt Sir C. Warren had been the subject of attacks—perhaps many of them unjust—but the Secretary of State in his reprimand took no consideration of the fact that Sir C. Warren had himself been attacked, and, for my own part, I think that it would be a most unfortunate circumstance if the fact that an attack had been made upon an individual in the Civil Service should be regarded as dispensing him from a wholesome rule of the Public Service and allowing him to enter into controversial matters. With reference to the

Secretary of State, here is the case of a subordinate official breaking a rule of the Department. The Secretary of State, it seems to me, took the proper course, and as soon as he was acquainted with the conduct of Dr. Barr rebuked him. I would ask the Secretary of State whether he can give the date on which he passed his reprimand? The letter appeared on a Saturday, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman upon what day his reprimand was sent to Dr. Barr, and I would also ask him a question which is of importance in relation to the system of administration in the Government Departments of this country. When the right hon. Gentleman reprimanded Dr. Barr, was he aware that that letter had been published not only with the assent, but by the very act, of a Cabinet colleague of his own? Merely writing the letter is not an offence; it is the publication which is an offence, and when the Secretary of State rebuked and reprimanded Dr. Barr, did he know that that letter had been sent to the *Times* by the Chief Secretary for Ireland? [An hon. MEMBER.: Why not?] This is a most important matter, if a Cabinet Minister in one Department is to become not only the encourager, but the instrument of a breach of regulation that goes to the whole root of administration in this country. I should have thought that the rule was well known to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and that at the time when he sent that letter he knew that he was aiding and abetting a subordinate of the Home Office in defying the authority of the Secretary of State. Another question which I would like to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland is why he sat still in the House and heard Dr. Barr rebuked, and why it was not until a week afterwards that he avowed that he was the man who had committed the offence for which Dr. Barr had been reprimanded? Why, hearing the conduct of Dr. Barr questioned in this House, and speaking on the subject himself in debate, did the right hon. Gentleman not get up and tell what had been his part in the transaction, and that he himself was the man who had led a subordinate of the Home Office to incur reprimand and displeasure from his chief? I would also ask the Home Secretary for the date at which the Chief Secretary for Ireland informed him that he was the person who had sent the letter to the *Times*. Those two dates are very important. So much for the part of the matter which affects prison discipline—one of the most important matters in the administration of justice in this country, and one which lies at the very root of its administration. It lies at the root of that administration of justice, which in our opinion is so outraged in Ireland, where it appears that personal influences are brought to bear in an extraordinary manner on administration, and the administration in this country, too, is not unaffected by it. It is very proper that a subordinate should be reprimanded for breaking the rules of his Department, but it is very improper that his chief should apologize for him in the House. I do not think the Home Secretary knew that he was really apologizing for the Chief Secretary to Ireland; but nothing can be more demoralizing to the public service of the country. [*Laughter.*] Hon. Gentlemen laugh—the Chief Secretary for Ireland laughs — the right hon. Gentleman thinks it a joke that one Cabinet Minister, behind the back of another, should encourage that other's subordinate to break the rules of his Department. This amuses the Constitutional Party. Well, I will now come to another laughing matter which is also a question of prison administration. We have heard that Pigott and also the solicitor to the *Times* obtained access to Her Majesty's convict prisons. Under whose authority was this given? Were there general orders given to the governors of convict and other prisons to admit anybody whom the *Times* wished? If not, by what right did this man get in? Did he go in under the direction of the Atterney General? The Attorney General said the other day that Mr. Soames had gone to all the official witnesses under his instructions. Was it, then, with the cognizance and under the instructions of the Attorney General that, in December, Pigott and Mr. Soames went to see the convicts Daly and Dr. Gallagher?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. E. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I did not state that Mr. Soames had communicated with the whole of the official witnesses under my instructions. In answer to a specific question I stated that I had requested Mr. Soames to obtain certain information, which Mr. Soames had obtained. This was in answer to a question whether I had any communication, direct or indirect, with any official. I am informed that Mr. Soames had not the slightest knowledge of Pigott's visit to Dale until after it had taken place.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: But did not the Home Secretary state that Mr. Soames had obtained permission for Pigott's visit?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. and learned Member has misunderstood my answer. I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: How did Daly obtain Pigott's address? The right hon. Gentleman stated that it was through Mr. Soames that Pigott obtained permission. If that is not so, it is most desirable that the exact facts of this case should be stated before we proceed further. It was because we desired to have these matters explained that we abstained from going into the matter earlier.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I will repeat what I said. I told the House that it was Pigott who applied to the directors of the prison for permission to visit Daly on private business. Daly being informed expressed a wish to be allowed to see him. Daly never knew Pigott's address, and the communication between Pigott and Daly took place in consequence of Daly's expressed wish. The permission was sent to Pigott direct by the Governor.

Sir W. HARCOURT: On that I wish to know whether, when Pigott made his application to the directors of the convict prison, he had letters of credit from anybody to introduce him? As I understand prison rules, a man out of the street could not go to a convict prison and see a criminal like Daly. Such a man would certainly be refused admission, and I want to know what representations were made to the directors of the prison to induce them to admit Pigott? There must be records of this. In December, when Pigott went into the prison, he was known to everybody connected with the *Times* to be a man of infamous character. It was after the letter of the 11th of November to Mr. Soames by which it was known that they were sending in a man of infamous character. The House is entitled to have a full explanation of all the circumstances. It is not enough to say that Pigott went to see Daly. He would not have been admitted until some explanation of the purpose of his visit had been given. We have no need to seek an explanation what he went for. We know—and everybody knows—that Pigott went in to get Daly to swear away the character of the hon. Member for Cork. I want to know who sent him there and who allowed him to go on such an errand? This infamous perjurer and forger went in to get evidence against the hon. Member for Cork. These are circumstances upon which we demand an explanation. They are points relating to the prison administration of this country to which I know no parallel. It may be they are specimens of Irish administration introduced into English affairs. There is another question of the administration of the police. Mr. Anderson occupies the confidential position once filled by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield with eminent distinction. If there is anything essential, I will not say to the honour, but to the efficiency of that position, it is that a man should strictly observe the obligation of confidential documents. A Commissioner of Police who betrays confidential documents is a man—I will say nothing of his character—utterly useless in the office which he holds. Who can trust a man who hands about official documents? We have had great reason to deplore the breakdown in some cases of the Criminal Investigation Department of the police, and I have always done my best to defend the Metropolitan Police, but if transactions of this kind are to take place, I shall be compelled to come to the conclusion that the Metropolitan Police can no longer be entrusted to the Home Office. For the Secretary of State to say that it was a proper proceeding for a man in Mr. Anderson's position to betray official documents is wholly unprecedented. If such a proceeding had occurred during the time of any of the right hon. Gentleman's predecessors, a man in Mr. Anderson's position would not have remained 24 hours in Scotland Yard. Then the Secretary of State has stated that these documents were the property of Le Caron. But who paid for them? Who was Le Caron? He was an informer to the Government—no doubt a valuable instrument; I say no more than that; but having got this valuable instrument, having expended upon him large sums of public money, you hand him over to the *Times* newspaper, and make him absolutely useless for the public service. You hand over your informer to the *Times*, and your head of the Criminal Investigation Department hands over confidential documents which—whatever the Secretary of State may say to the contrary—were, in my opinion, the property of the Secretary of State, and Mr. M'Cullum and Mr. Houston, without the leave of the Secretary of State, make use of them in the interest of the *Times*—that is to say, such of them as serve their purpose they use, and others, which do not serve their purpose, they withhold. When that is the manner in which confidential documents, the property of the Government, are dealt with, am I not right in saying that such scandals have never been known before? If such matters are to be justified by the responsible Minister, if they are to be justified by the man who, as Home Secretary, is bound to condemn them, it is intolerable that the police of the country should be left in such hands. Why have we hitherto trusted the Executive Government? Why have we trusted the Secretary of State—and I have maintained that doctrine as strongly as anybody. Why, because we believed that the Secretary of State was the man who would have the courage and the determination to condemn, to restrain, and to punish transactions of this kind. When the Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, the head of the Criminal Investigation Department, allows himself to be made a tout for the *Times* newspaper, when he allows himself to betray the secrets of the Department, and to hand over his informers to the *Times* without the consent of the Secretary of State, to hope to maintain the system of police in such an event is impossible and intolerable. I think these are matters which deserve the attention of the country. Hon. Members must know whether these principles of Irish administration are to be introduced from Ireland into England behind the back of the Home Secretary. We ought to know by what authority these cadging solicitors of the *Times*, and their trustworthy principal witnesses, like Richard Pigott, are allowed to rove about at their pleasure in Her Majesty's gaols. We should like to know by whose authority that was done—who allowed these witnesses to go, and what they did when they went? It is a rule that visits of that kind should be made in the presence of a warder, and I am pretty sure—the Home Secretary will correct me if I am wrong—that, unless in the case of confidential disclosures to the prisoner's solicitor, the visits must be made in the hearing of the warder or deputy-governor. These are the things which we want to know about Her Majesty's prisons. And then, about the Metropolitan Police, we want to be informed whether that mild apologetic tone which the Secretary of State has taken about the conduct of Mr. Anderson is to be a lesson and example to the police from the highest to the lowest—whether, if induced by the *Times* or anybody else, they are to hand over the secrets of the Government and to act as the private detectives of the *Times*? These are things which seem to me to go to the very bottom of the Administration in this country, and I hope the Secretary of State will give us some explanation with regard to them.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, East): The right hon. Gentleman has exhibited somewhat less than his usual fairness in dealing with public functionaries and officers in positions of trust who are not present to defend themselves. I shall proceed, in answer to the groundless statements and indefinite charges of the right hon. Gentleman, to offer a plain statement of matters of fact which, I trust, will entirely dispose of those charges. The first point of the right hon. Gentleman was the relation of the Secretary of State to the Prisons Department, and to a particular officer of that department. I do not quarrel much with the language in which he described the position of the Secretary of State, but I think he omitted some particulars which ought to be stated. The Prison Commissioners are subject, no doubt, to the instructions of the Secretary of State. They are said, by the Statute of 1877, to be his assistants in the administration of the Prisons Department. I have always looked upon it as a subordinate department, attached to the Home Office, though, perhaps, not strictly a part of it, but, speaking broadly, the Prisons Department is subject to the authority of the Secretary of State, and I myself accept fully the responsibility for all that is done in that department. As to the case of Dr. Barr, the publication of Dr. Barr's letter was certainly made in peculiar and special circumstances. Dr. Barr was the medical officer, not the resident medical officer—I do not wish to lay too much stress on that—attached to an English prison. The Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the course of last year, desired to have the assistance of an experienced English prison doctor for certain changes he proposed to make with regard to prison treatment in Ireland. I had not the honour of a personal acquaintance with Dr. Barr; the selection was not made by me, but by the Prison Commissioners, who were the best authority, and it was made without any knowledge on my part. Dr. Barr was chosen, and he was asked whether he would put himself at the service of the Chief Secretary for Ireland to make whatever inquiries he should be directed to make? Dr. Barr consented, and proceeded upon that mission. I am not going to enter into details; they are fresh in the memory of most hon. Members of the House. Dr. Barr made the inquiries directed by the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and he made his report. The consequence was that Dr. Barr was exposed to attacks which reflected upon his personal character and honour, and which called for some answer, and which, if any concession is to be made to human infirmity, might well give ground for a certain amount of temper. I desire to put the matter in as temperate a way as I can. Dr. Barr returned to England. [*Cries of* "When?"] On March 9 the letter appeared to which allusion has been made.

Sir W. HARCOURT: When did Dr. Barr return?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I am afraid I cannot fix the day.

Mr. MACNEILL: About a year ago.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: This letter appeared in the *Times*, and the right hon. Gentleman drew attention to it. I do not complain of that. I am not concerned to defend either the spirit or the temper of some of the observations of that letter. I do not think it is incumbent on me to pass any criticisms of that sort. But I had to look at that letter upon the challenge of the right hon. Gentleman in the strict light of the prison discipline and prison rules, and the prison rule on the subject I will read with the permission of the House. It was circulated by the Prisons Department some years ago. It is a rule prohibiting the publication of books relating to the department. It was issued on July 22nd, 1879, and is to the effect that the attention of the Secretary of State has been called to the question of allowing the publication by officials of books relating to the department, and he desires that no officer shall publish any work relating to the department unless the sanction of the Secretary of State has been previously obtained. I may add that the rule was a consequence of a Treasury regulation of some years before which was directed against publications of this kind. The Treasury issued an order in which they stated that their attention had been called to the fact that official information had been communicated to the public Press by officials, and the rule was made to prevent the publication of official secrets from official sources of information. I think that rule was very properly enforced by the head of the department for this purpose also, to prevent discussions in the public Press of matters connected with the department by officials of the department, a matter which I think is equally to be deprecated with the disclosure of official secrets. Although originally aimed at disclosure of official secrets, I think the rule ought ought to be applied to the public discussion of matters on which controversy takes place within the department. I hope that nothing I may say will be taken as minimizing the rule in the slightest degree. I conceived that Dr. Barr's letter was a violation of the rule, for although the main subject of that letter was the treatment of Irish prisoners in Irish prisons, and although every statement of fact contained in that letter had been, I believe, publicly given in evidence by Dr. Barr and Captain Stopford, when called as witnesses, yet incidentally and indirectly in that letter he did comment upon the prison discipline of England. It was only done by way of illustration of what went on in the Irish prisons; still, it did involve a discussion and a statement of the manner in which the affairs of the English Prison Department, of which he was an officer, were conducted, and therefore not technically merely, but directly and truly, it fell within the rule. The right hon. Gentleman has asked for dates. I knew upon March 11 that Dr. Barr had transmitted a letter that he intended to publish in the *Times* to the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The question of the right hon. Gentleman calling on me to take some course in the matter was announced on March 12.

Sir W. HARCOURT: What was the date of the first letter to Dr. Barr? When did the Home Office write to him?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: The Home Office wrote on March 12. The right hon. Gentleman has been a little ambiguous in his language respecting that letter. At first he suggested that I had addressed a reprimand to Sir C. Warren, but had not addressed a reprimand to Dr. Barr.

Sir W. HARCOURT: That is not what I said. I said the right hon. Gentleman had addressed a reprimand to both, but that he had apologized to one and not to the other.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not conceive that the letter I addressed to either could be properly described as a reprimand, because in each case I should not have thought the circumstances that led to or called for the publication of the particular document—the article by Sir C. Warren and the letter by Dr. Barr—were such as to call for a reprimand on my part. I think the circumstances explain and justify——

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Justify?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, justify the action of those officers, and I had special reason to think in Dr. Barr's case that he had no intention to violate any of the official rules on the subject. Accordingly I addressed precisely the same letter to each of those officers. In each case I drew the attention of the officer concerned to the rule, and requested him to observe it in future. I have already stated to the House that, in answer to that intimation, Dr. Barr expressed to me, through the Prison Commissioners, his regret that he should have departed in any way from the instructions laid down by the Home Office. When I wrote my letter to Dr. Barr, and when I gave my answer in this House, I knew what had occurred between Dr. Barr and my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary. I had learnt that on March 11, and on the following day I answered the right hon. Gentleman's question, and directed a letter to Dr. Barr. That is precisely how the matter stands with regard to Dr. Barr. The right hon. Gentleman's comment upon that is, that one Cabinet Minister encourages a subordinate of another Cabinet Minister to break the rules of the department. I should have thought that nobody knew better than the right hon. Gentleman that that suggestion was absolutely unfounded. It was by no means the business of the Chief Secretary for Ireland to inquire whether Dr. Barr had made a communication to me before he had sent this letter to the *Times*. ["Oh, oh!"] Certainly not. It was no business of my right hon. Friend who sees this letter of Dr. Barr, who submits it to him on its road to publication, to inquire whether Dr. Barr had previously shown that letter to me or not. I was entitled, as his official superior, to complain that he had not applied for my sanction before publishing his letter. That, therefore, concludes the case of Dr. Barr. Dr. Barr did violate the official rule in the letter; but his publication revealed nothing that was not known to all the world before he wrote his letter. It was a republication of what he had already said in sworn testimony, so that all the mischiefs aimed at by the rule were absent from his case. It was not on account of the tone or temper of Dr. Barr's letter—which were not, perhaps, in the best taste, and, perhaps, not in accordance with prudence or discretion—that any breach of the official duty of Dr. Barr was aggravated or increased in any sense. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the letter of Dr. Barr would disqualify him for service as a medical officer in an Irish prison, and if Dr. Barr's official duties obliged him to attend Irish prisoners in an Irish prison, I agree that that letter would be a disqualification; but I do not see that it is a disqualification for his duties in the ordinary prison at Liverpool, which he has hitherto discharged with satisfaction to others and signal credit to himself. The next matter to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded in his cross-examination of me was the question of the visits of Mr. Soames and Pigott to Gallagher and Daly at Chatham. I can only regret that the right hon. Gentleman was not in the House when I replied to this question. I told the House that the visit by Pigott to Daly took place in compliance with the ordinary prison rules as a visit by an ordinary friend or visitor, and that it took place by the wish of Daly himself.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Did Daly invite Pigott?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: No. I stated to the House this morning that application was made by Pigott to the Prison Commissioners to be allowed to see Daly on private business. Inquiry was made of Daly whether he wished to see Pigott.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Give the dates again.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member is a little exacting. I think some of the ordinary courtesies of debate might be shown.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Moral assassination. [*Cries of* "Order!" *and interruption.*]

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Pigott made application to the Directors of Convict Prisons for permission to see Daly on private business. A visit was due to Daly at the time under the prison rules, and Daly was asked by the Governor in the ordinary way whether he wished to see Pigott. Some little delay occurred, as there was another person whom Daly wished to see. That person was unable to come, and accordingly Daly expressed his wish to see Pigott, and upon November 12 permission to visit Daly was sent to Pigott, and that visit was paid on December 3, 1888. It took place in the presence of the Deputy Governor of Chatham, according to the ordinary rule. It was not, therefore, in pursuance either of any general or special order applicable to Pigott that that visit took place. Then the right hon. Gentleman asked whether this was done by the direction of the Attorney General. For that suggestion there is not the slightest foundation, and I have received a letter from Mr. Soames since I have been in the House to-day, which informs me that—

> "In view of the question which you will be asked in the House to-day, I think it right to inform you that Mr. Richard Pigott did not visit the convict Daly at my request or on my behalf, nor have I ever been informed of what took place between them at that interview."

As far as I am aware, therefore, the suggestion that the Attorney General or anyone connected with the *Times* had anything whatever to do with that visit is absolutely unfounded. The permission that was given to Pigott was given in the ordinary course of the prison rules—given in accordance with the ordinary practice—and in no way differed from any other visit the prisoner was entitled to receive.

Sir W. HARCOURT: If the right hon. Gentleman believes that, will he tell us the circumstances of Soames's visit?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I have already given that information to the House this morning. I will repeat it if it will satisfy the hon. Gentleman. [*Cries of* "No, no!"]

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hon. Gentlemen opposite want to shirk it. [*Cries of* "Order!"]

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I informed the hon. Member for Longford this morning that Mr. Soames applied on October 15 for permission to see Daly for the purposes of the Special Commission; that he obtained that permission from the Directors of Convict Prisons; and that the visit took place on October 27, 1888, in the presence of the Deputy Governor. With regard to Gallagher, he saw him on the same day, and, so far as I am aware, under the same circumstances. Now, the right hon. Gentleman appears to suggest that Mr. Soames should not have been allowed to see Daly.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I only asked why he saw him.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I have stated why he saw him. He saw him for the purpose of the Special Commission; and I should like to challenge the right hon. Gentleman to say whether, this Special Commission being sitting at the time—and it is an inquiry of some importance, involving matters of considerable public interest, involving the question, among others, of the conduct of what I may call the Queen's enemies in America——

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Dungarvan!

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I say I challenge the right hon. Gentleman to say whether, under these circumstances, he would consider his duty as the Secretary of State to deny to the solicitor who represented one of the parties to that inquiry the opportunity of seeing a person who, at any rate, was not unlikely to furnish valuable information. That is not the view that I take of my duty. On the contrary, I take the view —and I assert it plainly and distinctly —that it was my duty to give facilities to any person properly qualified to give evidence material for the discovery of the truth before that Commission. I believe I should have neglected my duty to the Special Commission and to the interests of justice if I had denied an opportunity to see Daly or any other person likely to throw light on the matters to be inquired into, or hindered the procuring of evidence. The visit of Pigott to Daly came under the ordinary prison rules, which required no intervention at all. The next subject to which the right hon. Gentleman referred was Mr. Anderson's conduct. I assume that the right hon. Gentleman has made himself acquainted with the facts before he brought his charges. The facts are these. Mr. Anderson had for many years been in correspondence with Le Caron.

An hon. Member: His name is Beach!

*Mr. MATTHEWS: These letters were written not only confidentially, but under the most positive and solemn pledge that they should be shown to nobody. For my part, I did not know Le Caron's name until he appeared in the witness-box. I was totally unacquainted with the fact that the right hon. Gentleman during his government and previous Secretaries of State has paid any moneys that had reached Le Caron. I knew absolutely nothing about it.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Nor did I.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: He had continued for a great number of years, over 20, in correspondence with Mr. Anderson, and I gathered that many of these letters were private letters to a private acquaintance. ["Oh, oh!"] Well, that has been sworn in evidence. ["No."] Certainly. The right hon. Gentleman makes an accusation against public servants without taking the trouble to make himself acquainted with the facts. These are the facts. A great many of these letters were private letters relating to no public matter at all. As I am informed, those letters never were at the Home Office and never were in the custody of anyone but Mr. Anderson himself. Nevertheless, and in spite of this circumstance, I am disposed to agree with the right hon. Gentleman that these communications should not be regarded as wholly private communications. Still, they must not be talked about as official documents in the ordinary possession of the Home Office. They were nothing of the sort. They were documents in private personal custody, and Mr. Anderson himself never parted with or showed them. They certainly were of a mixed character, by no means corresponding to the description of the right hon. Gentleman. Le Caron comes to this country on a private errand, as the right hon. Gentleman, I presume, is aware— [*A laugh*]—then the right hon. Gentleman has not taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the circumstances of the case. Le Caron comes over, as I say, and he resolves to offer himself as a witness before the Special Commission.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Is that his evidence?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes; that was his evidence, and the hon. Member knows that perfectly well. Mr. Anderson did all in his power to dissuade him from becoming a witness. Mr. Le Caron's information was full of interesting and very sensational matter—[*Opposition laughter.*]—I should think no one will deny that—with regard to what I have described as the Queen's enemies in America.

Mr. CLANCY: Dungarvan!

*Mr. MATTHEWS: What authority had Mr. Anderson to prevent Le Caron from tendering himself as a witness?

Sir. W. HARCOURT: I never said he had any.

*Mr. MATTHEWS; Well, it was in his option to tender himself as a witness, and Mr. Anderson's persuasions having failed, it was clear that his evidence would be produced. I think that it is evident that Mr. Le Caron had serious information, and I am unable to say that Le Caron was not a perfectly proper witness to appear before the Commission and entitled to say all that he had to say, much as I should be disposed to agree with the right hon. Gentleman's view that it is a pity that Le Caron will no longer be available as a source of information on any subject of this kind. I think the touting for the *Times* if he takes Le Caron and introduces him to Mr. Houston. What has Mr. Anderson to do with Mr. Houston? Who is Mr. Houston? I have another question that comes to my hand. They come day by day, and we get a little bit of the truth by degrees. I should like to ask whether Pigott's order to visit Daly was obtained by Mr. Houston? Perhaps the Home Secretary has never heard of Houston. I can inform him who he is. [Mr. MATTHEWS here made a gesture.] Oh, then you know. There is one fact with which the Home Secretary is acquainted. Well, now, I have answered the Home Secretary. I now come to the question of Dr. Barr. The right hon. Gentleman says that Dr. Barr's published letter went through the Irish Secretary's hands on its road. On its road to Dublin? To the *Times?* It went by the underground passage between the Irish Office and Printing House Square. The Home Secretary says that this letter from Dr. Barr may have been characterized by bad taste, imprudence, and indiscretion. This is the letter which was sent to the Irish Secretary to look at, and which he sends on to the *Times*—this letter which the Home Secretary says is characterized by bad taste, imprudence, and indiscretion. See how these Cabinet Ministers love one another! One critic, the Home Secretary, thinks that the letter is characterized by bad taste, while the other critic, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, sends it on to the *Times*, with his *imprimatur*. But the Home Secretary has said a much more important thing about this letter. He has said that if the letter had been written by an Irish prison doctor it would have disqualified him for his position. Now, what was Dr. Barr sent to Ireland for? He was sent to advise the Irish Government and Irish doctors upon the treatment of Irish prisoners. He was sent as an impartial man of experience whose advice could be relied upon, and yet this man is declared by the Home Secretary to be a man whose action would have disqualified him from retaining his position had he been an Irish doctor. That is the sort of advice on which the Irish Government rely in connection with the treatment of Mr. O'Brien and other Members of Parliament. They fortify themselves with the opinion and advice of a man who the Home Secretary says would be disqualified for holding office in an Irish prison. But an Irish Nationalist might very well be imprisoned in Liverpool or some other English town, and surely if Dr. Barr is disqualified from taking care of a Nationalist in Ireland, he is also disqualified from taking care of a Nationalist in Liverpool. When the proper time comes for discussing the question of Dr. Barr's salary, I shall ask how any Nationalist prisoner can possibly be placed under the control of the man who wrote that letter. Now, I have asked the Home Secretary whether Pigott's admission to the prison in which Daly was confined was obtained by Houston, and we ought to know whether it was or not.

*MR. MATTHEWS: I have already stated to-day that Pigott's admission was obtained by himself on his own personal application.

SIR W. HARCOURT: But was it obtained on the recommendation of somebody else?

*MR. MATTHEWS: Without any whatever.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Well, that is an answer to my question. Now let us consider the visit of Mr. Soames. It is very important to observe the ground upon which the Home Secretary has defended the visit of Mr. Soames to Daly. I accept his explanation, and I believe it to be the true explanation of the whole matter, and I wish to have it on record, because it must be the foundation of our whole inquiry. This, then, was no proceeding between private parties, for the Home Secretary has stated that it was a State inquiry into the conduct of the Queen's enemies. That statement will relieve us of some difficulty when we come to discuss the position of the Attorney General, because in a State inquiry against the Queen's enemies the Attorney General was, of course, the proper person to conduct that inquiry. This, then, was a State prosecution from the first. [*Ministerial cries of* "No!"] It has been so avowed by the Home Secretary, and we now know where we are. If you did not like what your Home Secretary said you should have stopped him. In order to defend the mission of Mr. Soames to the convict Daly, the Home Secretary said this was a State inquiry, involving the conduct of the Queen's enemies, and, as this was a proceeding against the Irish Members, I presume that the representatives of Ireland are, in the opinion of the Home Secretary and the Government, the Queen's enemies. Well, this, which has never been avowed openly by the Government before, was what everybody thought, but now we have it on the authority of the principal Secretary of State, and I think that it will form a very solid basis and foundation for our future treatment of the subject.

*Mr. **MATTHEWS**: The right hon. Gentleman has mistaken my words. The words I used were "the Queen's enemies in America."

Sir W. **HARCOURT**; Yes; but their accomplices are supposed by you to be here. However, we shall deal with this matter presently. At this moment I content myself with pointing out that this inquiry into the conduct of the Queen's enemies is the inquiry which we understood was arranged by the First Lord of the Treasury out of kindly interest for the hon. Member for the City of Cork. The candour and simplicity of the Home Secretary have now afforded us all the assistance we could desire in preparing for a full discussion of the question when the proper time arrives. Now as to Mr. Anderson's conduct in the matter. We are told that the Home Secretary knew nothing about Le Caron. Well, he was not likely to know anything about him, any more than I was. When a man in the position of Mr. Anderson has secret information he never tells anyone who are his informers. Mr. Anderson's duty in the Criminal Investigation Department is to get all the information he can and to keep it to himself, only disclosing just so much as it may be absolutely necessary to disclose when action has to be taken. The right hon Gentleman says that these letters from Le Caron were not, in the proper sense of the term, official letters. Of course they were not. Letters of this kind are not produced in the Home Office; there are a number of secret communications in Scotland Yard which never come to the Home Office. They are documents in the hands of the police for the detection of secret crime. That is the character of the documents in question. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that all the informers against thieves and pickpockets in London are the private friends of the Commissioner of Police, and that their communications are in the nature of private correspondence which they may take from the pigeon holes in Scotland Yard and hand over on the Commissioner's recommendation to the Secretary of the Loyal and Patriotic Union or anybody else? I will say no more at present except this—that if the Home Secretary is satisfied with the answers which he has given me, I have no reason to be dissatisfied with them.

*Mr. A. J. **BALFOUR** (East Manchester): I was a good deal puzzled yesterday when the right hon. Gentleman refused with some indignation the offer made by the Leader of the House to afford him facilities next week for bringing forward a Vote of Censure against the Government and formulating his charges against them. But I now understand the motive that actuated the right hon. Gentleman. When a Vote of Censure is moved, a speech lasting two hours and a half is about the full allowance to any individual orator, but such a limit of time would not satisfy the right hon. Gentleman when speaking on this question. We have now been engaged in this discussion for about two hours and a half. [*Cries of dissent, and* "Your usual accuracy."] Well, for about two hours; and of that time the right hon. Gentleman has occupied at least two thirds with his two very long speeches. At that rate of progress, if anybody else is to be admitted to take part in this debate, it certainly will be difficult for my right hon. Friend near me to bring it to a conclusion in time to satisfy the requirements of the law. I do not propose to travel over the whole ground traversed by the right hon. Gentleman, because I shall have an opportunity later of speaking on the whole question and dealing with these ridiculous allegations made by the right hon. Gentleman, for the purpose, obviously, of creating Party capital which refer to the action of the Government and the now pending Commission. But as the right hon. Gentleman has challenged me, I must say a word with respect to the case of Dr. Barr. It is very difficult to get a fact into the head of the right hon. Gentleman. I have already striven with such powers of lucid exposition as are at my command to tell the House and the right hon. Gentleman that I never gave anything that can be described as an *imprimatur* to the letter of Dr. Barr. He sent it to me; he desired it to be forwarded, and I did forward it. Of course, if I had seen any grave objection to Dr. Barr's proposal, I should have advised him not to send the letter, but I saw no grave objection to the course which he proposed, and I therefore carried out his request and did forward the letter to the *Times;* but that is not a justification for saying, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, that I ever gave the letter my *imprimatur*; or that I am responsible for the contents of the letter or the taste of the writer. I hear the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman and his attacks upon our Party cheered by hon. Members opposite; but am I, therefore, to do those Gentlemen the injustice of saying that they approve the taste of the right hon. Gentleman? Never shall I utter such a calumny against Gentlemen opposite. I recognize that every man has a right to defend himself within limits in the manner best suited to his taste and genius—the taste and genius of the right hon. Gentleman lead him into very strange paths—and I maintain that I am not to be held responsible for the manner in which Dr. Barr has repelled attacks upon himself of the most scandalous description. Let the Committee take note of this fact; this attack on Dr. Barr has been made under the guise of an earnest regard for official discipline and official etiquette. Is there a man in this House who is taken in by that shallow pretence? We all know why Dr. Barr is attacked. We all know that he made enemies of Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite because he exposed all the rubbish that has been talked about the treatment of so-called political prisoners in Ireland, and we also know that as soon as hon. Members below the Gangway opposite have marked out their victim the right hon. Gentleman comes forth as executioner. That is all that I have to say with reference to Dr. Barr. I have defended him often before in this House, and I shall be prepared to defend him again. I rose on this occasion simply to point out the absurd and shallow pretence under which political animosity against a single individual has been cloaked under cover of a simulated regard for the discipline of the public service.

MR. T. M. HEALY (N. Longford): I trust, Sir, I may have the presence of at least some Member of Her Majesty's Government, because it would be difficult for me to continue the debate on this subject in the absence not only of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, but also of every other Member of this Administration. My observations will be mainly addressed to the Home Secretary and the Chief Secretary, and the right hon. Gentlemen are not in their places, a circumstance calculated to embarrass me in what I desire to say. We are in this position; that not only do we find the greatest difficulty in obtaining information from the Government at question time, but when we are anxious to debate a particular subject the Treasury Bench is quite empty. The Chief Secretary stated, in the first instance, that Dr. Barr had disposed of what the right hon. Gentleman called the rubbish which had been used by the Irish Members in regard to Mr. Mandeville and Mr. William O'Brien. I was curious to see on what that statement of the Chief Secretary was founded, and I turned to the verdict of the Coroner's Jury at Fermoy in reference to the death of Mr. Mandeville.

An hon. MEMBER called the attention of the Chairman to the fact that there were not 40 Members present.

The House was counted and a quorum found to be present.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I turned to the verdict of the jury at Fermoy, which had the advantage of Dr. Barr's presence—a jury composed of non-Nationalists; at any rate, out of 13 persons on the jury only two were Nationalists—there being the following Conservatives upon the jury, all of whom had had the advantage of listening to Dr. Barr—namely, Mr. Philip Routledge——

THE CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. and learned Member that the point now under discussion is connected with the Home Office Department, and that Dr. Barr and the action of the Home Secretary in reference to Dr. Barr's conduct cannot come under discussion here, but must be discussed on a Vote that will follow hereafter.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Quite right. I do not desire to press the subject further than this—namely, that when the Chief Secretary says that we have indulged in rubbish, and that Dr. Barr has disposed of that rubbish, it was as well to show what a jury of Conservatives or non-Nationalists thought of Dr. Barr when they said in their verdict, "We condemn the reckless and unfounded charges made by Dr. Barr against the medical men and poor Mr. Mandeville." That, I think, sufficiently disposes of the allegation that we have invented rubbish about Dr. Barr. But coming more immediately to the argument, I would refer to the vigour and determination the right hon. Gentleman displays in this House in defending Dr. Barr, it being a remarkable fact that the only thing that will induce the right hon. Gentleman to arouse himself from his lethargic langour is the defence of persons who make themselves obnoxious to the Irish people. Any subject concerning the welfare of Ireland he treats in his finest and airiest and most dilettante style; but if anything is said against a person who makes himself obnoxious to nine-tenths of the Irish people and five-sixths of their Representatives, he flings himself, like an athlete, into the arena, and with all the vigour he can command rushes forward to the breach. I admire the manner in which he defended Dr. Barr, but there are some slight matters it would have been well to have developed in the course of that defence. He says it is stated that the Home Secretary has offended against our canons of good taste; but at any rate he did not comply with the canons of good taste at Dungarvan, nor with the canons of good taste or good feeling in the abstract.

THE CHAIRMAN: I again call on the hon. and learned Member to notice that the subject under discussion is the Home Office, which has no relation to Dr. Barr, whose conduct should be discussed on the Prisons Vote.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I bow, Sir, to your ruling, but I am at a loss to understand how the Chief Secretary was able to hedge in his reply, while I am not allowed to answer his observations. I will not, however, pursue the subject further, but will put some questions to the Chief Secretary. I should like to know whether when the Chief Secretary forwarded Dr. Barr's letter to the *Times* he sent a letter of his own with it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then, I suppose that the right hon. Gentleman wrote his name on the envelope, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith. With regard to the challenge that we should bring forward a Vote of Censure, I should be very slow to recommend anyone to bring forth such a Motion until we have obtained the whole truth as to the action of the Chief Secretary and the Home Office in these matters. It would be a great convenience, now that the *Times'* case has finished, if the Government would lay on the Table the evidence printed up to date, so that hon. Members may be able to detect the figures and statements made by the Government before we ask the country to form a conclusion upon the whole range of the evidence. I further wish to know whether Pigott's letter to the prison authorities is in existence, and, if it is, whether we can have it. I also desire to know the names of the prison authorities who granted permission to Pigott to see Daly; whether these gentlemen have a friend called Houston; and whether Houston saw the prison authorities and obtained an assurance that Pigott's application would be granted. It may be interesting to the Attorney General to know that we hope to capture Pigott's diary, if we have not done so already, and that it contains matter which is interesting and curious with reference to Pigott's private friends. As I am informed, it was Houston who secured for Pigott an interview with the dynamitard, and I ask the Home Secretary to say whether there is any correspondence on the subject of those visits. I wish, in addition, to repeat the question which I have put to the right hon. Gentleman without success. I am amazed in a matter of this kind at the blank ignorance of the Government. It is so convenient, so virtuously convenient, to know nothing. We are, in fact, ignorant of the operations of the Queen's enemies, and when I asked a question about Pigott, the Home Secretary could not answer without notice—he had never before heard of Pigott since the days of Dungarvan. The Home Secretary has stated that he believed—speaking from memory—a person called Richard Pigott in the month of December visited Daly. I might compare the Home Secretary to certain inhabitants of Laputa who required a flapper behind them to strike them as occasion required in order to wake them up to the necessities of the occasion. If I might suggest a flapper for the right hon. Gentleman I would name the Attorney-General, who would jog his memory upon these inconvenient points. I merely confine myself to inviting inquiry on the subject; I make no charges or allegations; I leave that to "our old friend Walter." And now I come to another branch of the subject, the interviews between Mr. Soames and Dr. Gallagher and Daly, and the subsequent interview between Pigott and Daly. We are not told whether Pigott saw anybody else, but I suppose he got the run of the prison—and certainly it was a place with which he ought to have had an intimate acquaintance long before; I quite recognize the fitness of things in that. My question is whether Pigott's interview and Mr. Soames' interview with these *détenus* were noted by the Governor of the jail. I understand from an answer given to-day that this official did not take notes of the interviews. Now, we know, of course, that Her Majesty's Government are most anxious that every information in the possession of Mr. Soames should be laid also before the representatives of the defendants before the Commission. We know the anxiety of the Government on the subject. The learned Attorney General, who was accustomed in Court to refuse even the names of witnesses he was going to call, or would not give us an hour's notice, will share the anxiety of his colleagues that all information obtained by Mr. Soames should, with the utmost freedom and generosity, be laid before us. So just are the Government, that I am prepared to be told at once that the Report of the governor of the gaol as to what took place in the interview between Pigott and Daly, and between Mr. Soames and Daly, and Mr. Soames and Gallagher, will at once—and that it was from mere absence of recollection that it was not done long since—be laid before Mr. George Lewis and the other persons connected with the defence. This has not yet been done, and I ask now, have these notes of the interviews been supplied to the Home Office, and shall we now have access to them as well as Mr. Soames? Those are my inquiries on these two points. But there is another matter I should like to refer to also. It is stated that Pigott got this visit to Daly in the ordinary course as a private friend. This is not denied. But there was also a convict named Nally brought over in the interest of the *Times* to Millbank Prison. Now, I want to show the difference between how the visits of Pigott were facilitated and the way the visits of prisoners' friends and the friends of the defendants before the Commission are facilitated. Pigott gets permission to see Daly as a personal friend, and Daly is a convict suffering punishment for one of the gravest offences against the law. Nally has five or six years to serve for an offence much less grave than the dynamitard. Nally, being forcibly brought over from Ireland, said, at the railway station, "I wish the people to understand that we are being brought over against our will; we are not going of our own accord." Now a visit was due to Nally—I believe he had not had a visitor for six months, but will it be believed this impartial Government stopped Nally's visit for misconduct? He made this statement at the railway station that I have alluded to, and the defendant's solicitor was refused admission to see him. But Pigott, by means perhaps of false keys, or having a pass key, enters Her Majesty's prisons with as much freedom as an official there. And hon. Conservative Gentlemen—they are "all honourable men"—go down to their constituents and say we have been treated with what Lord Dufferin calls "the august impartiality of British law." I call it all humbug—humbug, Sir. What is more, I think the fact I have stated is a disgrace to every person concerned. You refused Nally a visit to which he was entitled. Nally, I understand, was a good-conduct prisoner; there were never any complaints against him. What he said at the railway station was the natural cry of a man who was being kidnapped, as he supposed, carried off against his will, not knowing where or why. He knew that Andrews, the gaoler of Downpatrick, had attempted to tamper with him, the man who was afterwards promoted to the honour of being William O'Brien's gaoler at Clonmel. Well, a visit to Nally is denied us, while Pigott is allowed the run of Chatham Prison, and is allowed to see the dynamitard or whoever he likes on the premises. I leave this incident in the history of Parnellism and Crime just there, and proceed to make another remark on Mr. Soames' action. A Commission has been created to inquire into "Parnellism and Crime;" but I think it is not improbable that, among other Commissions that may be appointed, it may be after a charge of Administration —and such a Commission is badly wanted—a Commission may be necessary to get at the bottom of "Walterism and Crime." I grieve to say such a thing of an "old friend" of Her Majesty's Government. I wish to say that rigorously, it may be slowly, but with a determined persistency, we will get at the bottom of this foul conspiracy. We have the virtuous Attorney General at the head of it as buttress and gargoyle, and, I presume, all the department of legal attainments; and then we have at the other end Richard Pigott, Mr. Soames, Mr. Anderson, and others who represent the gutters, the agents to do the dirty work, men whom the learned and virtuous Attorney General would not touch with tongs. Step by step with fatal accuracy we trace their progress through the mire. These visits were paid to men in convict gaols, men under the most terrible sentence—a life sentence—men absolutely hopeless, destitute of all prospect of freedom, condemned as enemies of the human race, condemned under the most terrible circumstances and with the most terrible facts against them; and, I ask—apart altogether from obtaining the evidence of such men against hon. Members of this House—I ask, was it a fair thing to the men themselves? I presume John Daly has friends—I presume he has a mother, sister, relatives living. We know from the Press that Dr. Gallagher has friends who are interested on his behalf; and, I say, was it a fair thing for the agent of the *Times*, be he Soames, Pigott, Anderson, or Inspector Littlechild, whosoever he may be, to put these men before the public in the position of persons who have been corrupted by the *Times?* I say nothing of what the characters of these men are, except that never yet have they been considered infamous until the *Times* attempted to affix that stigma. Apart from the attempt to suborn perjury as against us, it was a gross, a grievous wrong—a hardship added to their life sentence—that they should be subjected to the temptation of Soames and Pigott. But in regard to the attempt to secure for the Attorney General evidence against us I say nothing. It is quite what I should have expected from him. It is exactly what we have had from the time when you put poison in the wine of your Irish enemies in Ireland; it is exactly what the leaders of the Irish race have always been subjected to. We should think ourselves unworthy of our position if all these engines had not been used against us. I am proud that they have been used; they are the accepted weapons of your political warfare, and they are as creditable as dynamite and assassination. Daly and Gallagher and Joe Brady are respectable citizens compared with men who tried to suborn their testimony to try and blast the character of innocent people. I think John Daly and Dr. Gallagher will sleep more soundly in their prison cells than men of great respectability who enjoy seats on the cushioned Bench of the Treasury. So much for that branch of the case; and now I resume my observations by way of interrogatory. I ask the Home Secretary whether there is, at Scotland Yard, an officer named Andrews? Of course, the memory of the right hon. Gentleman cannot be expected to hold all these matters; but, no doubt, the Attorney General will be better acquainted with Andrews. Is there, at Scotland Yard, a detective, an inspector, or officer of that name? "We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." If I ask the Chief Secretary, Is there a constable named So-and-so, he will say "No," because the man happens to be a sergeant. I ask, Did Andrews of Scotland Yard pay a visit to America within the last six or eight months? We know that the Government cannot reveal the purpose of Littlechild's visit to Chatham to interview a dynamitard, for that was for police purposes, but was it for police purposes that Andrews visited America? To that I should like an answer. Then, in the words of the nursery rhyme, I would ask, "What did he there?" Also, I should like to ask whether Andrews saw Le Caron in America? And, also, whether it was Andrews who got Le Caron to repair to Westminster for his private affairs? These are specific questions, and I presume they can all be answered with engaging candour by the Home Secretary. I say the statements in regard to Le Caron that he came here on private affairs uninfluenced by the *Times*, and that Anderson did his best to prevent him coming forward—his best seems to have been the present of a volume of documents—will not deceive the most rudimentary intelligence. We shall require some further proof on this point. We have not had an answer to the question as to Anderson's introduction of Le Caron to Houston. It may or may not be his business to introduce unawares spies from America, but Houston has been examined, and Le Caron has been examined, and although we have not been able to get access to the files of evidence we have the *Times* in the library, and in the future I shall regard it as a precious heritage. I find that Mr. Anderson wrote a letter introducing Le Caron to Mr. Houston. If that be so, what becomes of the statement of the Home Secretary? What business has an official, a secret official of the Home Office, whose very functions are undefined, to introduce Le Caron to Mr. Houston? And I ask how is it that this expression occurs in the letter: "Mr. Houston is a gentleman on whom you can thoroughly rely"? Now, how under Heaven did the innocent Mr. Anderson know that the stranger Mr. Houston was a gentleman on whom the friendly Le Caron could rely? Mr. Anderson has kept himself aloof, kept his vesture unspotted from the *Times*, kept himself free from the stains and bespatterments disclosed throughout this unhappy inquiry; but by some means, perhaps by hypnotism, Le Caron seems to have got a letter from Mr. Anderson telling him Mr. Houston was a gentleman on whom he could thoroughly rely. Of course, I do not like to put conundrums to the Home Secretary, but I should like him to give some official explanation that will hold water, for really we have been treated to such a variety of phantasies in the statements of the right hon. Gentleman, as, for instance, that Mr. Anderson acted purely as an official, that an explanation becomes the more necessary. I think that it is a remarkable thing that a packet of letters should have been handed over to Le Caron; but first let us deal with the Home Secretary's law. His law on the point is this—and we all know the right hon. Gentleman is a great lawyer—all the occupants of the Treasury Bench are great or brave, something or other. Let us examine the law laid down by the right hon. Gentleman as Home Secretary and Q.C. It is impossible to distinguish the two capacities of the right hon. Gentleman—his law is that the property in a letter is not in the recipient but in the sender. So Le Caron, having as a private friend written various letters from America to Anderson, goes up to him and says, "I demand from you my private property." But is this the law? Why, more absurd law was never laid down from the Treasury Bench. I should have thought, after decisions in notorious cases, everybody would know what the law is. The decision in Lady Lytton's case, in that of the Marquess of Clanricarde, and in Curl's case was that the property in a letter is in the recipient, subject to the right of the sender to prevent publication, unless the sender is an agent of the receiver. I challenge the whole Treasury Bench, Law Officers and all, to contradict that proposition. I observe they are mute as statues. What becomes of the statements of the Home Secretary rolled trippingly off the tongue at question time, and with carefully-prepared impromptus ready? If such are your answers on law, what are we to think of your answers on fact? Law is, to some extent, an ascertainable science, for we may find out the law on the subject of letters, whether forged or otherwise, by reference to books and decisions in leading cases. We have asked for information, and we expect it. Are we to be stopped from Votes of Censure and criticisms on facts by knowledge being withheld from the House? We desire to arraign the conduct of the Government. If the subject were Samoa, we should have Blue Books galore; but 86 Members of Parliament obtain less consideration. It is not long since the Statute Law Revision Act swept away an Act that I should like to refer to, and I sometimes doubt when I see old Statutes swept away wholesale whether we are altogether safe in relying on the Statute Law Revision Act. It is not long since that in the revision of the Statute Law there was swept away an old Statute which showed that our forefathers had reason to suspect the action of the King's Government with regard to prisoners, and which made it highly penal for any one to hold out a temptation or bribe to a prisoner to give evidence. That Act is now a thing of the past; it has been swept away; but so far as the moral censure of mankind will carry any weight with a Tory Government, so far as the condemnation of Members on these Benches, and privately of your own, if not from your "old," friends—so far as these things go, and so far as your sensibilities are not blunted by the knowledge that you have £7,000 a-year paid quarterly, you feel that every honest man who has considered your dealings in these matters has nothing for you but censure and condemnation. You profess to grant an inquiry to us upon the ground that you wish us to clear our character. How anxious you were for that result! There was one Member of the Party opposite very honest on the subject. I took note of the words of the hon. Member for the Loughborough Division (Mr. De Lisle). The hon. Member said, "I hope they will not succeed in clearing their character, I hope it is all true; I believe it to be all true, and my hope and expectation is that it will be proved to be true." There spoke the Tory party. You are not sorry for doing this; you are only sorry for being found out. You are not sorry for having had Richard Pigott as a pal and a chum; you are only sorry that we have got to know about him. If you thought there was no stain or stigma attaching to the matter affecting Pigott, why did you not tell us about it a little sooner; why have we had to corkscrew the information from the Home Secretary? Why, if you are not ashamed of all this, don't you give us the entire facts; why are not the documents in the Home Office laid before the House? Why are not the letters from Houston to Pigott, and the substance of the interviews between Gallagher and Daly and Soames, laid before the House? If you are not ashamed of the transaction, produce this information. I will tell the Government this, that if the Irish Members do not get it sooner they will get it later. The Government in tracing the course of the Irish Members from 1879 to 1889 have stooped to every device and have shrunk from nothing, disdaining not the help and aid of the forger and the swindler; but if ever our time comes, we on this side of the House will probe to the bottom the Government's connection with this business. We will trace Houston's visits to the House by the entrance to the Ladies' Gallery, his interviews with the First Lord, with the Home Secretary, and with the Attorney General, and the means by which these letters and documents have been obtained, because, unhappily for the Government, there happen to be such things as pigeon-holes, in which the details of all these transactions may be found. I say again, there will be an investigation afterwards which will, in my opinion, raise up before the Tory party a ghost that will haunt it as far as this generation is concerned, and will continue to haunt it for generations to come, as being the cause of one of the most despicable businesses in which a great political party has ever been engaged.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to move the reduction of the item on Vote 4, Class II., by £200, two month's salary of the Chief Inspector of Factories. [Opposition *cries of* "No, no."] I do not understand that any motion has been made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), or any of the speakers who have succeeded him, or I should certainly not have intervened at this stage. If it is not the intention to raise the question by distinct Motion, I will do so.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to move the reduction of the salary of the Home Secretary by £100. The Chief Secretary has interfered as usual, and sought to pour oil upon the troubled waters by telling us that we have raised this point to make party capital out of it. It must be admitted by every one that there never was a more important question raised by an Opposition. We have been asked why we did not propose a Vote of want of confidence instead of making insinuations. There is no insinuation in this matter; the attack is direct and specific against the Home Secretary. Then the Chief Secretary diverged into the boast that he has defended Dr. Barr, and will defend him again and again. We are not here to accuse Dr. Barr; we are accusing the Home Secretary himself for his action in connection with this matter. I think that the worst feature was the mode in which the Home Secretary, having been advised of the fact that the Chief Secretary had approved of the letter and sent it to the *Times*, did not mention it, but threw the blame upon Dr. Barr, who is innocent in comparison with the Chief Secretary. The Home Secretary has said that the letter of Dr. Barr was imprudent and wanting in discretion; but this imprudent letter had been sent to the *Times* by a colleague of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman has rebuked Dr. Barr; but has he rebuked his colleague sitting by him? If he has not, why not? It is his colleague who is responsible. I would like to ask the Chief Secretary whether he received any letter with this letter from Dr. Barr, and whether he sent an answer to Dr. Barr. If so, will the right hon. Gentleman oblige us by reading the two letters? We want to get to the bottom of this, but there is a perpetual system of shirk, shirk, shirk. Now with regard to Pigott and Daly, I noted one remark which fell from the Home Secretary—I am always glad when the right hon. Gentleman interferes in a Debate, because he always put his foot into it. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the Commission as "a great State inquiry." After that let us have no more about its being a private action between the *Times* and the Irish Members. Now, we have Mr. Soames first visiting Daly; we then have the Government telling Pigott that he can visit Daly. Daly had a visitor coming; we are told his name was Jones—I thought it would be either Smith, Jones, or Robinson. I do not believe it. Anyhow, Daly was told by the Governor that instead of a mythical Jones he might see Pigott. Had he known Pigott before, or had the Governor explained what was the private business upon which Pigott wanted to see him? Then we have the letter from Mr. Soames. We have heard a great deal of Mr. Soames in the course of the inquiry, but I would not believe that gentleman on his oath. Mr. Soames had an agent, Houston, who admitted in the witness-box that he was acting as a sort of general agent in the matter for the *Times*. Is it not clear that Houston sent Pigott to Daly? Was not Pigott paid for visiting the man? Was it not done specifically for the *Times?* I want to sweep away all this evasion, and to get at who is responsible in this matter. With regard to Mr. Anderson, we have been told that he was a private acquaintance of Major Le Caron, who, by-the-bye, is not a major, and whose name is not Le Caron. But does the Home Secretary know in any way that Le Caron is a private acquaintance of Mr. Anderson? We are told that some of those documents were private letters, written by a private friend; but I am not aware whether Mr. Anderson has ever met Major Le Caron. Mr. Anderson sent him to Houston with a letter; he did not know Houston, and was somewhat surprised when Mr. Anderson gave him the letter to Houston. What were the relations between Houston and Anderson before? Did Anderson give any private information to Houston? All these things require explanation. Who has the documents at the present time—Houston or Le Caron? We want to know this, because it is proper that the solicitors for the defence should have the opportunity of seeing not only the papers given to Le Caron, but the whole papers. Houston was allowed to make a selection of the papers which were useful to him, and the defence ought to be allowed to do the same. In the case of papers at an Embassy, no Minister would dream of handing them over to anybody, but would leave them at the Chancery of the Embassy for his successor. Had Mr. Anderson any right to give these papers to whom he liked? No, he was bound to keep them, and to reveal the name of his spies to none but his successor in the office. The Home Office has been prostituted by the Government, and we protest against the right hon. Gentleman allowing Mr. Soames or Pigott to roam about the public prisons at their will. The Government have not displayed equal justice. The right hon. Gentleman has been carried away by the idea that this is a great State trial, and that the gentlemen charged are enemies of the Queen. If that is the view of the right hon. Gentleman, he cannot give documents to the defence, though he says he is ready to do so. Is he going to give them to the enemies of the Queen? The right hon. Gentleman has not given the same facilities to the defence as to the *Times*, and I and my friends will not rest satisfied until we get to the bottom of the transactions between the Home Secretary and his subordinates and between those subordinates and the *Times*. Until we do that we will not move a Vote of want of confidence. To do so would be as absurd as to join a company of burglars and then move a vote of want of confidence in their proceedings. The verdict we want is that of the British public. Let right hon. Gentlemen opposite cease to boast of their majority in the House, but ascertain whether they have a majority of the constituencies. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the item of £15,000 for the Home Office and subordinate Departments be reduced by £100, part of the salary of the Secretary of State.—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Div.): I was in Court during the whole of the time—except one day—that Beach, otherwise Le Caron, was under examination and cross-examination. The Home Secretary has described Le Caron's evidence as interesting. That is not the epithet I should have thought appropriate, because the evidence was a good deal more than interesting. I can, however, quite understand the selection of the epithet by the Home Secretary, because the evidence revealed to him the future of the adventurer by whose support he was once returned for Dungarvan. The right hon. Gentleman is misinformed with regard to the relations between Mr. Anderson and Houston. Does he not remember that Beach swore that he never heard of Houston until the name was suggested by Mr. Anderson? It is perfectly clear that the relations between Houston and Beach, otherwise Le Caron, were brought about by Mr. Anderson, and by no one else. Let me point to the responsibility of Mr. Anderson in this matter. I think no one will accept the Home Secretary's statement that Le Caron's letters should be given back to him as his private property. Le Caron distinctly swore that he was in receipt of—I think—£50 per month from the Home Authorities for giving information. Was not that information conveyed in the form of letters? Were not the letters paid for out of public taxation? These letters were official or semi-official documents, and to speak of them as Le Caron's property is a mere quibble; and the fact that the Home Secretary has to descend to a quibble so small and petty is the strongest testimony of the plight in which the Government find themselves. Le Caron was asked by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Hackney (Sir C. Russell) what was the character of the letters, and for the first time during his cross-examination Le Caron then showed signs of temper; he turned sharply upon the counsel for the defence and said, "Would you expose the lives of men in America?" The reply was one the justice of which every one must acknowledge. Every one must know that this spy in his communications with the Government must have mentioned the names of men who were probably helping him with information, and that the publication of their names would expose them to the fate of informers. [Mr. JOHNSTON: Assassination.] Yes, assassination. That is my point. Why was Houston put in possession of information which would expose men in America to assassination? Why were these documents exposed to the risk of revelation by Houston? Who is Houston? He is a private individual so far as the Government are concerned. The Home Secretary seems to think Houston is a solicitor. I believe the solicitors' branch of the legal profession is not yet dishonoured by having him in its ranks. Houston went to the unfortunate and wretched Pigott and held out to him the temptation of unlimited money for the simple trouble of forging documents to destroy the character of political opponents of the Government. Is Houston a man whom the Home Secretary would trust? Is he ready to pin his faith to Houston? I should like to see Houston and the Government bracketed together—they are bracketed together by public opinion already. I should like the right hon. Gentleman to get up and say Houston is a man of honour in whose good faith he trusts. If he has not faith in the man, then I ask, in the name of common sense and decency and the public welfare, why was Houston entrusted with public documents, every one of which brought danger of assassination to paid informers? The Home Secretary says these were private documents, the property of Le Caron. Did the Home Secretary bring the existence of these documents to the knowledge of the defence? No; it is well known that Le Caron was sprung on the defence, and that the counsel for the defence had never before heard of him. Mr. George Lewis is quite as trustworthy a person as the procurer of the Pigott forgeries. Why, then, was not Mr. Lewis allowed to go to the archives of the Home Office and make his selection in the same way as Houston? What was the position of Le Caron? He was the most valuable spy in America in the hands of the Government. Why did they destroy that valuable instrument? The Home Secretary said that Le Caron insisted upon giving evidence, but Mr. Anderson could have prevented him if he pleased. Why did not Mr. Anderson say—

> "You are a valuable agent of the Government. You have given us information which enabled us to defeat the machinations of the enemies of the Queen. We have given you large sums of money, and you must remain faithful to your bond. We will not allow you to appear."

That I think would have been a more reasonable position for the Government to have taken up if they were more anxious to defeat the enemies of the Queen than to put down their political opponents. The Attorney General need not have called Le Caron; he had not called Anderson and others. But the Attorney General of his own free will called Le Caron, and destroyed his value to this country. But there is another thing more important, which casts the gravest reflection upon the Government. [*A laugh.*] The hon. and learned Member for North Antrim (Sir C. Lewis) laughs. Everybody except the hon. and learned Gentleman—who did not go into the box in Derry when his own honour was concerned, but preferred to surrender his seat and pay the costs—will agree with me that the conduct of the Home Secretary and the Government with regard to the prisons casts the gravest censure upon them. It is supposed that no key is strong enough to open the prison cells except the clemency of the Crown. That is the greatest security for justice and equal treatment to all classes. Any man on the Opposition benches may apply for an interview with one of these unhappy men in gaol: the brother, the wife, the child of a prisoner may apply, and they will be refused unless the application falls within narrowly prescribed limits. But what is refused to a relative or friend is granted to an agent of the *Times*. That agent may be high or low. It may be Soames one day, Preston or Pigott another. What is the object of allowing an interview between Pigott and the condemned convict Daly? There is no prospect of liberty for that unhappy man. Twenty years will probably be the shortest term which a man sentenced to penal servitude for life for a dynamite outrage can hope for. Daly has, therefore, seventeen years at least to look forward to of daily misery, slavery, horror, and the solitude of penal servitude. It is a position so awful, that many men would prefer death by hanging. A man in that position is approached by an agent of the *Times*, who has any amount of money to offer for perjury or forgery, and who represents the omnipotence of the Government, who, can release him in a day. Release, liberty, plenty of money—these are the temptations which are placed voluntarily by the Home Secretary in the hand of an agent of the Government approaching a man in a living tomb. A great deal of scorn has been heaped on the head of the unfortunate Pigott. He deserves it all. But when we consider the misery, the poverty, and the despair of Pigott on the one hand, and the bribes offered to him by sleek scoundrels on the other, we may well consider that a portion of the condemnation should be awarded to those who tempted him. Surely, if Daly had been wicked enough to seek for his release by giving false evidence against his countrymen, his crime would be less than that of the Government. The Irish party have had to fight their cause with loaded dice, bribes, perjury, and forgery against them, and this is the way in which the Government stand equally and impartially between their political opponents in the House of Commons and their accusers. The country will, I am sure, take a just view of the conduct of the Government.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like an answer to the points I have raised.

*MR. MATTHEWS: I am very unwilling to intrude again upon the attention of the Committee, and I would not do so but for the fact that the delicate language of the hon. and learned Member for Longford has never been more conspicuous than it is to-day. He accuses the Government, he accuses me, of trying to suborn the testimony of Daly. [MR. BIGGAR: "Hear, hear."] I am glad I am not misunderstood. The hon. Gentleman also accuses me of misrepresenting to the House the facts with regard to Le Caron and his visit to this country. [MR. T. M. HEALY: And the law.] That is a minor matter. After these accusations the hon. and learned Gentleman actually appears to think that I ought to answer his questions. But if the hon. and learned Member believes me guilty of speaking untruly he ought to have abstained from asking me any questions. If in these circumstances I reply to the hon. Member, I do not do so because of any right in him to ask the questions. Pigott's application for a visit to Daly was made on the ground of private business. I will read the application made to the Governor of Chatham Prison. It is this—"I am advised to obtain another interview with John Daly." [*Cries of* "Another."] I beg pardon; that is not the letter. [*Cries of* "Read it."] The letter to which the hon. Member referred is dated October 22, 1888. It is addressed to the Chairman of Prisons at the Home Office, and is as follows:—

> "Sir,—May I beg the favour of an order to visit Convict John Daly, who was convicted some years ago for the offence of having dynamite bombs in his possession, and who I believe is now in Chatham Convict Prison, on private business? I am your obedient servant, RICHARD PIGOTT."

That letter was the only application received. [*Cries of* "Read the second letter."]

SIR W. HARCOURT: Read the answer to it.

*MR. MATTHEWS: There is no direct answer. Upon that application Daly was informed of the desire of Pigott to see him, and upon Daly expressing a wish to see the applicant,—namely, R. Pigott—the ordinary printed form was sent to Pigott permitting him to see, for a stated date and time, the prisoner John Daly at Chatham.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to read the second letter?

*MR. MATTHEWS: In the second letter application was made for a second interview, which was not acceded to.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will the right hon. Gentleman read that second letter, and give the reasons why it was not acceded to?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I dare say there were reasons, but I am not in possession of the facts. No question has arisen upon it in the course of the debate, or in previous applications made to me. [*Cries of* "Read the letter."] I am not going to read the letter; it has absolutely nothing to do—["Read, read"]—with the subject matter before the Committee. Now, the hon. and learned Member for Longford did me the honour to comment with considerable virulence on a statement I made, not carefully prepared beforehand, as to the ordinary law which regulates ownership in letters. I believe I stated that the ordinary law is that the property in a letter and its contents, the right to control the publication, belongs to the writer. I believe that, as a general proposition, is strictly accurate and true. With regard to the particular letter which Le Caron afterwards published, hon. Members complained of the communication of that letter being made to the representatives of the *Times*, overlooking the fact that the great purpose of the communication, whether to Houston, or Soames, or anybody else, was that these letters were to be published to the whole world by being given in evidence by Le Caron to the Court. Le Caron's purpose and determination were to make all he knew with respect to the transactions in America public to the whole world. Whether the contents of those documents reached Houston or Soames a few hours or days before the knowledge was published to the whole world is perfectly immaterial. Observations pondence between Houston and Pigott, the most material thing in the whole case, was destroyed in order to suppress the truth. I am not speaking of the Attorney General, but of those miserable wretches with whom it has been his misfortune to have to deal. I am speaking of Le Caron and Houston, and I say that they were both capable of destroying any documents. Houston admitted in the box that he had destroyed one of the most material documents. The Home Office, or any one connected with it, ought not to have placed those documents in the hands of Le Caron and Houston, and to leave them to decide which documents should see the light. The proper course was to have sent those documents straight to the Court, so that it should have the custody of them, and in order that it might see what the documents were. I made no reflection on the Attorney General, but if he thinks it necessary or desirable to protect Le Caron or Houston from reflections, then I think he has got a more difficult task before him than he imagines.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: If the Home Secretary subjects me to the suggested catechism regarding Pigott I am afraid I can give him very little information. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to know really what were Pigott's motives or how much money he got for doing his dirty work, then he had better apply somewhere nearer home. I moved a nominal reduction of this Vote because I thought it was absolutely necessary that the Committee should concentrate its attention on this subject a little longer. I do not, however, see the necessity of putting the House to the trouble of a Division, and, therefore, I ask leave to withdraw the Amendment. (*Ministerial cries of* "No, no.")

Mr. T. HEALY: Before the Amendment is withdrawn, I should like to point out that the Attorney General has made a statement of a somewhat remarkable character, and one in which I am sure has, most unfortunately, misled the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman stated that the right hon. Member for Bury and the hon. and learned Member for East Fife were afforded access to those documents and made a selection.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: No; I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I said nothing of the kind. I said that after Le Caron had given evidence, and when the documents had been put in, Le Caron offered that the Court should see the whole, and after giving his evidence it was arranged that the right hon. and learned Member for Bury should go through them and communicate with the hon. and learned Member for Fife.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The hon. Gentleman will have us understand that any documents not before Le Caron while on the witness table the right hon. Member for Bury and the hon. Member for Fife were allowed to go through. I understand, however, from the information in my possession, that this conveys a complete misappreciation of the facts. As I am informed, Le Caron was never given by Anderson at the Home Office the entire documents he desired, and the documents which the right hon. Member for Bury and the hon. Member for East Fife went through were not the whole of the documents, but only documents entrusted to Le Caron by Anderson. That is not the impression conveyed by the Attorney General. On the contrary, the impression conveyed by him is that all the documents forwarded by Le Caron to Anderson were allowed to be seen. The defendants were not allowed to have access to documents. The only documents which they were allowed to have access to were documents that had been edited by Mr. Anderson. And that, forsooth, is acting fairly and squarely! The Attorney General has made a statement in the House which, if not corrected, would have left the House and the country under an entire misapprehension. I repeat that there were documents supplied by Le Caron to Mr. Anderson which Mr. Anderson never allowed the Court to get, and which counsel for the defence never had access to.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: No; neither had counsel on the other side.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The counsel for the other side was the Attorney General, who had a friend at the Home Office.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: I rise, Sir, to ask whether, when I have said that I had no access to those documents, direct or indirect, it is in order for the hon. and learned Member to say that I had access to them through a friend at the Home Office?

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is it right for the hon. and learned Gentleman to put an interpretation on my words which my words do not warrant? What I desire to convey is this, and the distinction was most philosophically taken by Mr. Soames. He was asked whether he had seen his counsel—meaning the Attorney General. "No," he replied, "I did not; but I saw Sir Richard Webster several times." That is Mr. Soames's distinction, and it is a neat one. I do not say for a moment that counsel engaged in the case had any access to that residuum of the correspondence between Le Caron and the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. and learned Member is now getting very near the verge of disorder.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If I have overstepped the bounds of order, Sir, I beg to express my regret. I will now come to the object which I had in rising, which was to ask the Home Secretary why he did not answer the few simple questions that were put to him. I was not so far wrong in asking the right hon. Gentleman for information, seeing that the right hon. Gentleman has blundered unintentionally into letting us know that there was a second letter of Pigott's which he is ashamed to read to the House.

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman allow me to interrupt him? I do not think it is worth while keeping up the controversy about the letter. The letter is perfectly irrelevant to the subject of the discussion; but I will read the whole of it to the House. It is dated Anderton's Hotel, December 5th, 1888, and is to this effect—

> "I am advised that in order to obtain an order for another interview with John Daly—(you are aware of what passed on the occasion of the interview)—it has become necessary that I should apply to you direct, and I have therefore to ask that you will be good enough to obtain the necessary authorization for a further visit at your convenience, and to forward it to this address.—Yours faithfully, R. Pigott."

Pigott addressed the letter to the Governor of Chatham Convict Prison. The Minute made by one of the Directors of Prisons, I do not know his name, is—

> "The convict had a visit since the commencement of the month; he is not entitled to another visit. You may inform the writer that the convict is not entitled to a visit, and you have no authority."

I thought that the letter was so irrelevant and insignificant that I did not read it before.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I think the Tory Party must now be grateful for my interposition. I congratulate myself on extracting this information from the right hon. Gentleman. The letter just read refers to what had passed at a previous interview. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what it was that had then passed; and will the Minute on the subject of the interview between Pigott and Daly be laid before the House? Again, the right hon. Gentleman has not explained how, if Mr. Anderson had nothing to do with Houston, Mr. Anderson wrote to Le Caron saying that Le Caron would be quite safe in trusting to Houston as a person who could be relied upon.

of this country, or to be made a present to Egypt. That is the question to be settled by this Vote. It may be said it is only a paltry £40,000, and that may be a paltry sum as compared with the millions expended on warlike operations in Egypt and the Soudan, but it is not insignificant when we compare it with the money grudgingly given to the assistance of crofters and others who have the misfortune to be white and our own countrymen. The Government will not attempt any scheme of migration for fear of the possible loss on advances by bad debts, on an advance say of £100,000 or £200,000 for the purchase of farms and stock, a loss that would be less than this £40,000 that it is now proposed to make a gift to the Egyptian Government. I think, therefore, I am entitled to lay this matter before the House. I have often said that we have done great injuries to Egypt, and if this were for the benefit of Egypt I should not be prepared to resist it. If it were left to the Egyptian people I should not resist it; but in my view it is a gift to the bondholders to enable their interest to be paid in full. We sent eminent representatives on several occasions to look into the finances of Egypt, Lord Dufferin, Lord Northbrook, Sir Drummond Wolff, and they all came to the conclusion that the taxpayers were overburdened and it was impossible to tax them further. By continued effort and after long negotiations the question was reduced to figures, and the Powers consented to a reduction in the payment on bonds for two years. Five per cent was deducted from the bonds due to foreign holders for interest, and I do not know on what principle ten per cent was deducted from the Suez Canal payments due to the British Government. This was done in pursuance of the policy resulting from a minute investigation of Egyptian finance made by a succession of English Ministers. The present Egyptian financial adviser, Sir Edgar Vincent, against whom I say nothing, took a different view; he adopted the French view as distinguished from the English view. He was of opinion that Egypt could pay her bondholders in full if only she were made to pay, and he proceeded partly by good management and partly by taxation to substantiate his opinion. He has succeeded by reorganization of finance and management to a considerable extent, and partly by taxation. The land revenue has not been remitted; the railway rates, which were declared too high, are increased; the taxes on waterways, declared wholly unjustifiable, are also increased; and a heavy tax has been imposed on tobacco. The result seems to me that he has gone in a direction entirely contrary to the policy of the Government. Instead of the money deducted from the foreign claims being devoted to the relief of the people of Egypt, as was intended, it has gone into the pockets of bondholders. The deductions are being paid back, but now it is proposed that our taxpayers shall not have the benefit with others, that this country shall not get its money back, it shall go in aid of the finances of Egypt. The truth of the matter is, Sir Edgar Vincent having now come to a bad year, in which he has a financial deficit and put to his wits' end to find money here and there to secure his financial equillibrium, has hit upon the idea of applying to Her Majesty's Government for this gift of £40,000. Now, it does seem to me there is no reason why the taxpayers of this country should make this gift, not for the benefit of the people of Egypt, but to secure payment in full to the bondholders. If we are to pay it, there is one thing I do especially object to, and that is that payment should be made on what seems to me the preposterous pretext that it is a set-off against payments of the Egyptian Government in respect to the Nile Expedition of 1882. We have heard much about this Nile Expedition. This country has undertaken expeditions at great expenditure to relieve Egyptian officers and soldiers cooped up in the Soudan. Having undertaken this Egyptian object for the benefit of Egyptians we were called upon to pay for every assistance offered by the Egyptian Government in fighting battles for that Government, treated almost as hardly as the Imperial troops are treated by our own Colonists when we go to fight Colonial battles. Having paid demands year after year, the Egyptian Government now make this posthumous claim, as I may call it. Two or three years ago Her Majesty's Government, having looked into the matter, agreed to pay a very large sum—nearly £300,000—to Egypt on account of this Nile Expedition, and, somewhat irregularly, paid her from a Vote of Credit; the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that to be a final settlement; and I think it is a breach of faith to come now with this pretext. I must express my surprise that the Chancellor of the Exchequer lends himself to such an operation. If an excuse were wanted, there was Suakin offered a much better one. If Suakin is British interest, or rather a British fad, I am bound to say I might have had difficulty in resisting a demand on account of Suakin. I do not want to detain the House. Do not let me be misunderstood. I recognize the good the present financial adviser of Egypt has done in some respects; but there is the fact that he has gone counter to the advice of the British statesmen who have examined Egyptian finance, and I protest against this Vote.

The House divided: Ayes, 164; Noes, 67.—(Division List No. 36.)

Fifth Resolution agreed to.

Sixth Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I think we were treated in a most unfair way last night in relation to this Vote. I know it was only pressure of public duty that compelled the Government to do as they did, and I do not complain of it, but it must be borne in mind that the entire evening had been given to Scotch affairs, and that this Vote was sprung upon us at a late hour in the morning, and closured before anything like an adequate debate had taken place with regard to it. As far as we are concerned, we should be satisfied if we had had anything like an adequate reply from the Government. That we did not receive, but for to-day, as we know, Sir, that you and the officers of the House are anxious to get away, we will not continue our opposition to the Vote if the Government will treat us with anything like fairness. We ask that we may have papers relating to this matter placed on the Table—the correspondence between the Treasury and the Irish Government, and, if there is any, between the magistrates included in this Vote and the Lord Lieutenant, and between the Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Secretary to the Treasury. Our case is that the Lord Chancellor of Ireland being a Member of the House of Lords should have had no knowledge whatever of the action of the Public Accounts Committee, and that the Lord Chancellor, as Lord Chancellor, should have had no knowledge of the decision of the Lord Lieutenant, because we are informed that the Privy Council take no action in advising the Lord Lieutenant, but act merely in ratification of the decisions of the Irish Law Officers. What I want to get at is, how the Lord Chancellor of Ireland came to be made aware that it was the intention of the Government to cancel the appointments as Resident Magistrates, and how it was that the Lord Lieutenant was got to make these men Justices of the Peace. I find on referring to authorities that the Lord Lieutenant before issuing the Commission of the Peace sends out a form to be filled up, and that one of the inquiries in that form is as to the amount of land possessed by the person about to be appointed. That shows that it was always supposed to be the law that Justices of the Peace should be persons of property. The Goverment have unmade these men Resident Magistrates, and, in order to give them a salary which could not be legally paid to them as Resident Magistrates, they are created Justices of the Peace by the Lord Chancellor, who is an Irish Judge, and is not supposed to be in touch with the Executive Government at all. The Lord Chancellor has an office at Dublin Castle—a practice instituted during Earl Spencer's *régime*, I am aware—but we nevertheless hold it to be unconstitutional that this judical functionary should be so closely associated with the Executive.

*The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I should be delighted in any way in my power to meet the wishes of hon. Gentlemen opposite in this matter. I think there has been some misapprehension of the relations of the Lord Chancellor and the functionaries in question, whose duties are not judicial. That there is any correspondence such as the hon. Gentleman has mentioned I very much doubt; but I will ascertain in the morning, and if there is, unless there should be some objection which I do not foresee, I shall be glad to place it on the Table.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I am at a loss to know how the functions of these gentlemen can be described if they cannot be called judicial. I would ask, amongst the other informa- given to us on this subject, that we should be furnished with a Return showing the precedents which can be cited for attaching a salary out of the public purse to the office of Justice of the Peace; also a Return showing the qualifications of these gentlemen, and the dates on which they became Justices of the Peace and ceased to be Resident Magistrates.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen): If the hon. Member will move for these Returns I will do my best to supply the information he desires.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: We will rely on the faith of the Government and accept that promise.

Resolution agreed to.

MOTION.

——o——

WORKMEN (WOOLWICH ARSENAL.)

APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection, be appointed to inquire into and report on the circumstances under which workmen entered in the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, and other Government establishments, between the 17th day of December 1861, and the 4th day of June 1870, have hitherto been refused the benefit of "The Superannuation Act, 1859," and "The Superannuation Amendment Act, 1873," and subsequent Amendment Acts, and particularly whether it was in the year 1870 or later that they were for the first time informed that a War Office Circular of the 17th day of December 1861 had assumed to suspend "The Superannuation Act, 1859," so far as these men were concerned, and as to whether they are or ought to be within the benefits of the said Act of 1873.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Order, that five be the quorum.—(*Colonel Hughes.*)

House adjourned at five minutes before Seven o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 4.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [March 29.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 21*st March*, 1889.

HOUSE OF LORDS (DISCONTINUANCE OF WRITS) BILL.—(No. 18.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*The Earl of CARNARVON: My Lords, when I first undertook to bring this subject before your Lordships, I was in much doubt whether I should invite your Lordships to proceed in this important matter by Bill or by Resolution. In favour of a Resolution there was the fact that we should be dealing with the whole subject ourselves, and should be exercising those inherent powers which almost every Legislative Assembly, so far as I am aware, is possessed of. On the other hand, if we proceeded by a Bill, that Bill must pass through the ordeal of another place, where there were certain risks attending on it which I need not further specify. After consideration I decided to proceed by a Bill, and I did so for two reasons—first of all, when Her Majesty's Government last year proposed to deal with this matter they did so by a Bill, and I had every right to suppose they had considered this important question with care. In the second place, so far as my limited judgment went, on looking into the matter, it seemed to me clear that a Bill was the right, if not the only course open to us. This opens, no doubt, what I may call a Constitutional question; and if your Lordships will bear with me, I will endeavour to state the few precedents which, I believe, govern this matter, so far as I have been able to acquaint myself with them. They are not without some historical interest. There are, as far as I know, only two cases in which this House has ever proceeded in great affairs of the kind by Resolution. The first was the case of the great Chancellor, Lord Bacon; the other, only a few years subsequently, was that of the Earl of Middlesex, the High Treasurer. Lord Bacon was tried before the House of Lords and convicted, and was fined £40,000, and condemned to imprisonment during the King's pleasure. The Earl of Middlesex was, as your Lordships will remember, ruined by the Duke of Buckingham. That prosecution, undertaken against the strenuous wish of King James I., gave rise to one of the anecdotes of the time which has been preserved. Anyhow, he was tried, found guilty, fined the enormous sum for those days of £50,000, and sentenced to a long imprisonment. But in both these cases this House took a further and very important step. They came to the resolution that each of those offenders—

> "Be for ever incapable of holding any office, place, or employment in the State and Commonwealth;"

and, secondly, that they—

> "Should never sit in Parliament, or come within the verge of this Court;"

and they concluded by this emphatic declaration—

> "This is the judgment and resolution of this High Court."

In looking into those cases I came upon a very singular passage written by the great Lord Clarendon only a few years afterwards with regard to Lord Bacon's case. Lord Clarendon, as your Lordships know, was a great Constitutional lawyer, and, writing as he did immediately after the time, he may be fairly supposed to have represented the Constitutional Law of the day. Lord Clardendon says, with regard to this resolution, that Lord Bacon should never sit in Parliament—

> "A clause of this nature was never before found in any judgment of Parliament, and in truth not to be inflicted upon any Peer but by attainder."

There was a third case, that of another high functionary, the Chancellor, Lord Macclesfield. He was tried for corruption, was found guilty, a fine of £50,000 was imposed, and he was sentenced to imprisonment. But it is remarkable that on his conviction it was at first proposed to visit him with the punishment of never sitting in Parliament, as in the cases of Lord Bacon and the Earl of Middlesex. After deliberation, however, the House came to a negative conclusion, and it was decided to leave Lord Macclesfield to the punishment of fine and imprisonment. The inference I would draw is that the House took the same view as Lord Clarendon did, and came to the conclusion that it was beyond their power, of themselves, to impose such an exclusion. May I now trouble your Lordships with the cases where the House of Lords has proceeded by Bill? They are very few; indeed, there is only one case that I know of, and it goes back to ancient times. George Nevill, Duke of Bedford in the time of Edward IV., was disabled from attendance in this House on account of poverty. The Act recites that the Duke of Bedford had not a livelihood to support and maintain the state and dignity of Duke of Bedford, and enacts that the making of the said duke and all his state and dignity should be hereafter void and of no effect. That is a precedent of a very early time; but perhaps the inference that may be drawn from it is this—that even in those disturbed and stormy times of English history, it was felt that if a Peer was disabled from his Constitutional functions for a particular time, it could only be done through the instrumentality of a Bill. There was, however, one case which seems to me strictly applicable to the question I am now arguing. It was a case in the Irish House of Lords. There was a Lord Strangeford, who was accused and found guilty by the House of having abused his high privileges as a Peer of Parliament by the acceptance of a bribe. The Irish House of Lords resolved that he should be disabled from sitting in Parliament or making a proxy, and they then adopted that which I apprehend was the right course, they proceeded by a Bill, which went down to the House of Commons, and was passed by the two bodies. I concluded, therefore, my Lords, on these precedents, in favour of proceeding by a Bill. There may, no doubt, be dormant powers within your Lordships' jurisdiction to exercise this right of exclusion, but I think you will agree that it is the safest course to proceed by Bill, and accordingly I have now the honour to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to the present Bill. Its provisions are very simple. I propose that whenever any Peer shall be proved in any Court of Law to be guilty of felony or misdemeanour, the Court should make a record of the conviction and sentence, and should forward the same, and a record of the evidence, to the Lord Speaker. I propose, secondly, that whenever in the opinion of a Judge of a Superior Court, any Peer should proved to be guilty of discreditable conduct which appears to the Court to be inconsistent with his character as a Member of the House, the Court should report the fact with a statement of the evidence to the Lord Speaker, who should lay it before the House, and the House should address the Crown, and the Crown should then cancel the writ of summons. The Peer thereupon would be unable to take part in the duties of the House until a new Writ was issued in his favour. These are the two courses which I propose to your Lordships to adopt. Your Lordships will see that in either case it depends upon the previous judicial action of some Court. But I propose, further, to give your Lordships an independent action in certain cases. There may be, no doubt, extreme cases where the character and conduct of the person may be matter of notoriety, and may come under your Lordships' cognizance. I think it is not fair to the House to withhold from it the power of taking independent action if it should think fit, and, therefore, I have introduced into the fourth clause the words "or otherwise," which cover that independent action. In such cases this House might take the initiative, and address the Crown. I apprehend there can be no valid objection on the part of anyone here to such a course, where there is a question of felony, and where a Judge of a Superior Court forwards his opinion to this House. But I have heard in conversation an objection to the word "misdemeanour." Misdemeanour no doubt applies in certain cases to very venial offences, but on the other hand "misdemeanour" is also a legal term which applies to a multitude of offences, some of them of the very gravest natnre. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible to omit "misdemeanour" from the category of offences. I do not lay very great stress upon the retention of the words "or otherwise." I thought it was desirable that your Lordships should have that power, and accordingly I inserted it. Your Lordships will remember that this House still keeps the matter entirely in its own hands, and it has the option to proceed or not as it thinks best. But I wish to point out that there are certain safeguards attached to my proposal, and those safeguards are practically two. First of all, it is optional on this House to proceed in any question, whether on the report of a Judge or on the record of a conviction, or its own initiative, and I cannot conceive for a moment that this House would ever proceed lightly or indiscreetly on such a subject; and, secondly, I desire to point out that by giving the Crown the power to re-issueta Writ of Summons you practically give che power of reversing an act which it is onceivable might have been done under false information and consequently unjustly. In fact, at every single stage, there is an opportunity either of arresting or of amending a false step in this matter. My Lords, that is practically the whole Bill, and I scarcely know what objections can be brought against it. My noble Friend on the other side astounded me the other night with two objections which he raised to the proposal I then made—namely, that this might affect prejudicially bankrupts, and that in former times there have been many bad characters in this House, and that the House has gone on very well in spite of them My noble Friend seems to have overlooked the fact that in the last Bankruptcy Act there is a specific clause which does disqualify Members of this House and the other House so long as they are in a state of bankruptcy, and therefore that matter is really beyond our control now. As to the second proposition that my noble Friend laid down, it is really too remarkable. He said that in former times there had been discreditable and unworthy Members of this Assembly. I recognize the fact that unhappily there have been unworthy and discreditable persons Members of this Assembly; but we are living, not in the 18th century, but in the end of the 19th, and in the full glare of a publicity which none of your Lordships can afford or will desire to disregard. No institution in the present day, unless it can command public respect, has any chance, and, I believe, has any real right to stand. But then I see that a noble Earl on the other side proposes to silence my Bill altogether by a proposal that it is inexpedient to proceed with any Bill affecting the privileges of Members of this House which does not deal with the question of the amendment of its constitution. Now, in the first place, I take exception to the phraseology of that amendment. This is a much larger matter than merely one affecting your Lordships' privileges. Those privileges are very great, and they deserve to be cherished; but at the same time that is comparatively a small matter. The important considerations are, the position you hold in the country, and your power to execute the great trusts confided to you. I venture to state that when the noble Earl, as he does, links together these two questions—a Bill for removing a great scandal, whenever that scandal arises, and a Bill for the Constitutional reconstruction of this House—he mixes up two things which have, comparatively speaking, very little in common. In the last few years we have had several Bills before us for the Constitutional reconstruction of this House; and, it may be, many years will pass before any of those Bills are consummated. On the other hand, a Bill for the removal of a great scandal—as undoubtedly it is a great scandal that any one should sit and vote and take part in this House who has forfeited all claim to public respect—stands on a wholly different footing, and, I maintain, cannot be deferred by one single twelvemonth. I put it to your Lordships that the purging of this House of unworthy Members ought to and must precede any abstract schemes of Constitutional theory. I do not know what the noble Lord's views may be as to the reconstruction of your Lordships' House; but if he succeeds in stopping this Bill to-night he will find it hard to make any one out-of-doors believe that he really is influenced by a great anxiety for Constitutional symmetry. It will be said—very unfairly, but it will be said—that this Amendment is a mere excuse for inaction, and that, under cover of a Parliamentary subterfuge, we postpone to the Greek Kalends the removal of a great scandal. I thankfully admit that the cases with which this Bill can have to deal are, happily, most few, and that, such as they are, they are grossly exaggerated every week in scandalous publications which go through the length and breadth of the country. I do not think that numbers are to be accepted as any measure or criterion in this case; but be they many or be they few, be it even one single case, it seems to me wholly indefensible that anyone who has been tainted by a public judicial conviction should sit here to make the laws, to pronounce on public policy, and to administer the justice of the Empire. I believe we are the only great legislative assembly that is without this power. The House of Commons has the right, and has frequently exercised it. The old Roman Senate, which gave the pattern and the idea of so many Legislative Assemblies, had and exercised the right with no sparing hand. There is not a club, not an association, that does not exercise this power. And shall we be told that we alone are so immaculate that we need no such measure; shall we be told that we are so disabled and tied up and crippled in our legislative functions that we alone are to submit to this intolerable burden? In the age in which we live, when practical utility is almost accepted as the only standard, the House of Lords is a very remarkable institution; it is unique. For nearly a century the clearest thinkers have noticed the curious contrast of hereditary right to sit here and the practical work which has been achieved. Mr. Pitt, even in his day, before the House of Commons was reformed, ventured to give a short life to the House of Lords. Lord Macaulay more than a generation afterwards repeated the same prediction. In the opinion of those two eminent men this House seemed doomed to a short existence; it seemed to be incompatible and inconsistent with the new ideas that were springing up at the end of the last and the beginning of this century; and yet, as a matter of fact, this House exists, and it exists in honour and in public respect. And why? What is it that has enable it to sustain itself so long? This House has had genius, high learning, great honour, accomplished eloquence, and a great fund of administrative capacity, and where it has not inherited it has welcomed within its ranks eminence of every kind; but the foundations of this House, I believe, have been laid yet deeper in the individual character of its Members. Stainless conduct, high moral qualities, the desire for the good of others, wholly irrespective of self or of party—these have been the foundations and the pillars of this great institution. If I wanted an illustration, I can think of no one who rendered such deep services to this House, who so conciliated public respect, who laid as regards this House so deeply the foundations of English respect for old institutions as the late Lord Shaftesbury. My Lords, it is these traditions to which I now appeal. I entreat your Lordships to be true to them, and not to allow any doubts, or scruples, or timid counsels to mar the unanimity of the vote to which I now venture to invite you.

*THE EARL OF FIFE: My Lords, in rising to move the Amendment which stands in my name, I should like, first of all, to say that I yield to no one in my desire to see this House purged of any Member whose presence here may be considered undesirable; but, with all respect to the great experience and abilities of the noble Earl who has introduced this Bill, I do not think that he has chosen the best course to attain his object. I gather that the noble Earl does not wish to raise any of the large questions connected with what is called the reform of the House of Lords; but does the noble Earl really suppose that if he were fortunate enough to obtain your Lordships' approval for this Bill, it would receive the same delicate treatment in another and stormier Assembly? The Second Reading of this Bill would provide a splendid opportunity, indeed a glorious field-day, for those Members of the other House to whom abuse and misrepresentation of your Lordships' House is an ever congenial topic. While cordially admitting the theoretical existence of the anomalies which the noble Earl has pointed out, I cannot see the advantage of courting discussion elsewhere on all the large questions involved in the constitution of this House, if we were only going to obtain the infinitesimal result of excluding from the House one or two Members who in point of fact never attend. I have always desired to see a large and well-considered measure for the reform of this House introduced; and five years ago I was one of a small body of Peers who supported the late Secretary for Foreign Affairs when he raised the whole question in a speech of great interest and singular brilliancy. But it now occurs to me that the majority of the noble Lords who now sit on the front Bench below me divided the House against my noble Friend, their late Colleague, although they are now held up to us misguided Liberal Unionists as the quintessence of true Liberalism. Since then I have very often thought this question over, and I become every day more convinced that the real solution of the difficulty lies in adopting a system of delegation as a basis of reform. In any system of delegation that may be adopted, those who are called black sheep would not be elected; and you would also get rid of the anomaly of Peers who very rarely attended, or of young Peers, almost fresh from school, coming down and being able to defeat useful and important measures. My Lords, I feel that this is not a fitting opportunity for me to venture to inflict upon your Lordships any detailed scheme of reform, but whatever other step may be deemed advisable, I am convinced that legislative powers should be delegated by your Lordships to a certain number of your body; and I cannot believe that it would pass the wit of man to devise some simple mode of carrying this out without interfering with the rights of actual sitting Members. I know that ultimately the delegated Members would make too small a body, and, therefore, it would be necessary to add other and more popular elements; but I think that some system of delegation should form the basis of any reform that was undertaken. I have always deplored the fact that the oldest and wisest Members of the House have always seemed to wish to avoid this question; and that, while men of all parties in the country are agreed that reform should be effected in this House, nothing whatever has been done. The noble Marquess at the head of the Government told us the other evening that nothing would be done, although last Session he admitted the necessity of legislation by introducing two very important Bills on the subject. We have been very frequently told that the best mode of treating this question is to leave it severely alone; and of course we all know by heart that collection of sapient phrases which have been grouped round the memory of the late Lord Melbourne. For my own part, it has never seemed to me that all these specious pleas for getting rid of every difficulty by delay constitute the highest form of statesmanship. The question of the reform of this House has been discussed on every platform, both Conservative and Liberal; last year it formed one of the principal topics in the address to his constituents of the present President of the Board of Trade; and we all remember that remarkable manifesto in favour of reform which was signed by the heirs to peerages sitting in the other House of Parliament. Indeed, everyone in the country is in favour of the moderate reform of this House, except our enemies outside. We have been told—and no doubt shall be told again—that the difficulties of getting measures through the House of Commons are so great that nothing can be done. But I fail to see why that House should require weeks to discuss a measure which does not directly affect its own constitution; but my point is that it is but timely wisdom, regardless of what may occur in another place, to put on record some measure to remove the inconsistencies and anomalies for which we are so persistently blamed, and throw on the other House the responsibility of not not passing it. Now I am sure your Lordships all sympathize with the noble Earl's desire to improve the composition of this House; but I cannot see the advantage of raising the whole question on such a fragmentary measure as this, because this Bill will raise all those larger questions connected with your Lordships' House when it arrives in the House of Commons, and it will afford our enemies there a sort of football for their surplus energies, and, after all said and done, no real progress will be made. There is a considerable section of the public outside who have a great and sincere veneration for this House, and who would like to see it placed in a stronger and more defensible position. But they do not follow very closely the debates of Parliament and the elaborate pleas put forward for delay; and it will seem to them that this Bill is really all that is going to be done. Naturally, they will begin to wonder whether your Lordships are seriously in earnest in this matter, and will at last cease to look for any reform whatever. Although I am one of those who have been anxiously desirous of seeing this great Constitutional question taken up by a responsible Government—and I am sanguine enough to believe that if it were only energetically taken up it might be successfully accomplished—yet I think that a man must have very strangely read the lessons of history if he is not prepared to admit that this House has played no mean part in the development of the liberties of the British people; and if only the altered circumstances are now boldly faced, I believe that the future has in store for your Lordships' House a part equally useful and as illustrious.

Earl COWPER: My Lords, I hope I may be allowed to second the Amendment. Both sides of this House seem to be so thoroughly convinced that something ought to be done, that I confess that I am diffident in holding to the opinion that this particular matter may be let alone. I believe that we fill a very high position in the estimation of the country, particularly with respect to our integrity and uprightness. A great deal, no doubt, is said about us, very justly, at public meetings and elsewhere, but I think that the clamour as to our morality and good repute is utterly unfounded. Those who wish to destroy this House use that argument, but as they strike at random they may very well be treated with silent contempt. Your Lordships have been warned about the clamour out-of-doors if this Bill does not pass. I am in favour of remedying everything which is shown to need it; but I think your Lordships ought not to be unduly influenced by clamour out-of-doors. My noble Friend said that, after all, we hold it in our own hands, and that we need not exercise the powers given by the Bill unless we choose. But this Bill will put us in a very different position with regard to the "black sheep" than we are now in. At present we are not responsible for the one or two noble Lords who may exist, but whom we do not see here, whose conduct is reprehensible. It is not your Lordships' fault that they belong to this House; but if we pass this Bill we shall be responsible for them. We cannot afford to allow the Bill to remain a dead letter; we must put it into practice at once. It will be your Lordships' fault if, in future, anyone possessing a bad character is allowed to exercise his privileges as a Peer. If we legislate in this matter we must legislate thoroughly, otherwise we shall be accused either of clumsiness in drawing the Bill, or of hypocrisy in appearing to do what we do not wish to do. Certainly, at first sight, the Bill does not seem calculated to remedy the imperfections complained of, but there are the words "or otherwise," to which attention has been called. Without these words the Bill would be of little use, because it would only enable us to get rid of those Peers who had been convicted before a Court of Justice. It would not enable us to get rid of a man who had been turned off every racecourse in the kingdom. Nor would it permit us to deal with a man who might have neglected every duty pertaining to his station as a landowner, or otherwise. The name of such a man might be used in every speech throughout the country in which the House of Lords was mentioned, to point a moral or adorn a tale; but without those words we should not be able to touch him. My noble Friend has alluded to the example set by the Roman Senate. If your Lordships consider that this House is such an Augean stable that it wants thoroughly cleansing, you will be driven to adopting something very like a Censorship; and the question is, "Who is to be the Censor?" The noble Lord has not told the House how the Bill is intended to be worked. Is this power to be put in the hands of the Lord Chancellor? If my noble and learned Friend is willing to incur such a responsibility, I do not envy him. When a noble Lord is convicted of misdemeanour or felony, or declared by a Judge to be guilty of conduct unworthy of a gentleman, and when his name is put on the Table of the House, who is to take up the matter and carry it through? Who is to put the machinery in motion? Is it to be the Government? I cannot imagine anything so invidious for a Government to undertake, because the Peer in question must either be one of their own supporters or an opponent. It would be just as unwise to intrust a Government to put this machinery in motion as it would be to leave Election Petitions to be tried by the House of Commons. Perhaps my noble Friend would propose that there should be a Committee of Censorship; but would he care to be Chairman of such a Committee? I doubt it very much indeed, and I think my noble Friend would find very few of your Lordships willing to help him in the disagreeable work of examining into the morals of brother Peers, with a view to expulsion from the House. There are far more pressing matters which ought to be taken up—such, for instance, as the bringing of the House into harmony with the spirit of the times by the introduction of Life Peers. There is also the question as to whether we cannot eliminate by some means not only the unprincipled and disreputable Members of this House, but also those who are inefficient and incompetent, and who, if they put themselves prominently forward, would do us every bit as much harm as those Members of our body at whom this Bill aims.

*LORD FITZ GERALD: My Lords, as no noble Lord on either side of the House seems inclined to rise to continue the debate, I will just make one or two observations, although the matter under discussion is not one particularly within my province. My Lords, I am not aware that any provision exists in the constitution of this House under which any Peer can be deprived of his rights as a Peer—nor can he voluntarily renounce them. There undoubtedly exists outside this House a strong desire that power should be vested in the hands of the House by which a delinquent Peer may be deprived of his right to sit and vote. In support of that view I may cite as my witness the noble Lord (the Earl of Rosebery). He has been a very active promoter of this reform, and I may refer to two speeches of his, one dating so far back as the year 1884, and the other made last year. I have had sent me from Mid Lothian a print of a speech delivered in this House on the 19th of March, 1888, on "The Reform of the House of Lords." In one passage the noble Earl says:—

> "I would do nothing to impair the independence of the House of Lords; but something, surely, it would not be impossible for the House of Lords itself to do—something to purify itself from those black sheep who can now disgrace it with impunity."

In a further portion of this print the noble Lord is represented to have used this remarkable language. Referring to the hereditary principle, he says—

> "But it does not merely make unwilling legislators—it also makes unfit legislators. I have quoted to you what Sir Michael Hicks Beach has said on the subject. It is not a particularly agreeable one to dwell upon; but I think we may say generally that 500 or 600 not unprolific families must always be accompanied by a proportion of black sheep. I do not think the percentage in this House is greater than in any other 500 or 600 families. I should rather be inclined to say less; but a percentage in an hereditary Legislative Chamber, be it large or small, is a thing you cannot admit. What you require in an hereditary Legislative Chamber, by the mere fact and principle of its existence, is an unblemished succession of hereditary virtue, hereditary wisdom, and hereditary discretion."

Again, he says—

> "If a Peer should happen to be a knave or a fool, people outside do not greatly blame him, but at once begin to talk of the constitution of the hereditary Chamber in which he sits; and they say that—'This unworthy man is able at this moment to go down and give a vote equal to that of any noble Lord on the Ministerial Bench.'"

And further on the noble Lord says—

> "Now, would the mere addition of Life Peers, whatever the number, have the effect of accomplishing what is one of the principal objects of all reform—namely, the exclusion of unworthy Members from your House?"

I do not think anything I could cite could more strongly justify the necessity for some measure of this kind. Your Lordships must bear in mind that at present you are powerless to deal in any way with the cases of delinquent Peers save, perhaps, by the cumbrous process of impeachment. Somehow or other, there has grown an idea out-of-doors that there are a number of these men who do come down on particular occasions and interfere with legislative work. I may add to the extracts I have read from the speech of the noble Lord that we must not forget this—that the brightest jewel in the Peerage is that power which is intrusted to your Lordships to superintend and enforce the administration of justice, not only in the United Kingdom, but also throughout the wide dominions of our Empress Queen. The noble Lord who introduced this measure cited several precedents, and I must say that in two of the cases that he quoted this House appears to me to have exceeded its powers when it presumed to enforce the exclusion of the Peers from the House, coupled with the declaration that they should be for ever incapable of serving the Crown. There is no such power by law, and I say that there is not in this House any power to expel a Member for misconduct, or any power to punish him for misconduct save on impeachment, or any power whatever to take from him the privileges of Peerage. Now this Bill proposes to give the House the power which it does not now possess of dealing with unworthy Peers who have been convicted of felony, or misdemeanour, or of gross misconduct, on the Report of a Judge of one of the Superior Courts. Such Report would come before your Lordships, and I apprehend the ordinary course would be to refer the matter to a Committee of Privileges, and, finally, it would be before the House again on a Motion to act on the Report of the Committee by addressing the Crown. The object of that Address would be to place in the hands of the Crown a power which the Crown does not possess at present—power to suspend the Writ by which, and by which alone, a Peer of Parliament sits in this House. In the case of the Lord Grey of Ruthyn it was held that—

> "No Peer can extinguish his honour; that it descends to his descendants; that even a surrender to the King is void—a Peer cannot surrender."

This Bill simply gives your Lordships a power which you have not at present.

Lord Fitz Gerald

I need hardly remind your Lordships that this Bill differs very little from the Bill which was before us last Session. The noble Lord (the Earl of Rosebery), in the speech from which I have quoted, calls attention to the fact that on the occasion of previous discussions some of your Lordships have admitted the necessity for some steps in this direction. The noble Lord says—

> "I remember that two of my colleagues in the Government of 1885 expressed themselves strongly in favour of ending this House; one in the Government of 1886 expressed himself to the same effect, and I was left almost alone on that side of the question, pleading to a somewhat listless country the advantages of a Second Chamber."

As to the argument that this is part of a larger question—the re-modelling of the whole constitution of this House—I look upon this question of power to purge the House of unworthy Members as quite apart from any such question. I am not opposed to some more general reform of this House; but the question now is whether you are, or are not, to have the power of dealing with delinquent Members. I am strongly of opinion that you should have that power, and accordingly I support the Second Reading of this measure.

Lord ESHER: My Lords, I think it my duty to submit to your Lordships how strange and dangerous and impracable this Bill is. I think it is strange, because it places the first step towards the depriving a Peer of his duties and privileges in the power of a Court outside of this House. It seems to me exceedingly strange that that power should be given to a Court outside this House, and that it should not give the same power to the same Court under the same circumstances with regard to the other House. But I desire to point out to your Lordships that, in my opinion, this Bill is also impracticable and dangerous. In the first place it says—

> "Whenever a Peer of Parliament shall have been found guilty, in any Court of competent jurisdiction in the United Kingdom, of any felony or misdemeanour."

What Court does that include? It includes, in England, Ireland, or Scotland, every Court of Quarter Sessions, any Recorder's Court, any Court at the Assizes where a single Judge is sitting, and it requires any one of those Courts —for they are all "Courts of competent jurisdiction"—upon a verdict, with regard to the slightest misdemeanour, at once to send a Report to your Lordships' House—what for?—in order to found a Motion that a Peer of Parliament may be deprived of his rights, and prevented from performing his duties. But, when a Peer has been so convicted, however slight the offence, this House will be bound, I should think, to take the matter into its consideration, and upon this House will be thrown the duty of considering whether the felony or misdemeanour is of such a kind as will satisfy it that the Peer "has been guilty of discreditable conduct inconsistent with his position as such Peer." It is not said that any Peer who is found guilty of a felony or misdemeanour is to be excluded from the House; but the House has to consider whether the felony or misdemeanour committed is such a felony or misdemeanour as is inconsistent with the position of a Peer. Now, with regard to the third section, it seems to me to be more difficult and more impracticable. It is—

> "Where in any proceeding before any Superior Court in any part of the United Kingdom, a Peer of Parliament is proved to the satisfaction of the Court to have been guilty of any discreditable conduct which appears to the Court to be inconsistent with his character as a Member of the House of Lords, the Court shall report the fact," &c.

Under that section, where a Peer is called as a witness in some very trivial dispute between parties, and is cross-examined as to credit, and, in answer to some question, he states something which, in the opinion of some Judge, will entitle that Judge to consider his conduct inconsistent with the character of a Member of the House of Lords, then that Judge is to go into an inquiry, and consider whether he will report to this House. It will put a new danger upon Peers of Parliament allowing themselves to be called as witnesses. And what is to become of the parties? What is the Judge to do? Is it possible that, upon a mere answer of the Peer himself, or upon the mere allegation by some other witness, which appears to indicate discreditable conduct on the part of the Peer, the parties to the cause—neither of whom may have anything to do with the Peerage—are to stand by whilst the Judge determines that question? The section says, "proved to the satisfaction of the Court." How can such a thing be proved to the satisfaction of the Court, unless the Peer whose conduct is impugned is called, and proposes a number of other witnesses? Even if the case arises upon an answer of the Peer himself, one would think that he must be allowed to discuss the question, so important to him, whether his conduct is or not consistent with his character as a Member of this House? Is the Judge to stop the cause in the presence of the parties, to allow the Peer to nominate counsel to defend him, and try out this issue as to the conduct of the Peer? Then, to go a step further, by what standard is the Judge to determine this question? Can anybody tell me by what rule of law, or by what rule of conduct, a Judge is to determine whether a thing is not simply discreditable, but "inconsistent with the character of a Member of the House of Lords." I confess that, for my part, I have no idea what that standard is. Then, in the next section, there are the words "or otherwise," by which the noble Lord intends to give this House power of independent action. But how is the matter to be determined? Is the incriminated Peer to be called to the Bar of the House, and counsel to be heard to show cause why his conduct should not be considered discreditable; or are you to invite a Peer who is accused of such unworthy conduct that you think you cannot sit with him to sit and discuss with you whether or not the case against him is established? It really seems to me that as a matter of practical utility there is no means of carrying this Bill into effect. There is another point. Supposing that a Judge reports to this House that the conduct of a Peer is in his opinion discreditable, and that this House, upon going into the matter, holds that the Peer is guiltless of discreditable conduct; what will be the position of that Peer? He will have a Report made against him by a judicial authority, and in his favour he will simply have a Resolution of this House that the conduct in question was not such as to be inconsistent with his character as a Member of this House. I can see no way of amending the Bill; I must, therefore, vote against it at this stage.

VISCOUNT MIDLETON: After the answer that my noble Friend received the other day from the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, I am not surprised that he has taken it upon himself to introduce this measure, upon the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread." Although this measure may be called a small one, it is by no means an insignificant one; because, although the number of Peers affected by it may be extremely small, on the other hand the mere existence of such Peers is magnified in publications which rarely reach the eyes of any of your Lordships, and in which the proceedings which this Bill seeks to deal with are stated to represent the ordinary morals of Members of your Lordships' House. I think the time has come when an attempt should be made to do for the British Peerage what, by means of Representative Peers, is done for Scotland and Ireland. In the case of Ireland, the Irish Peers have the power of electing certain of their number to be Representative Peers for life; and in the case of Scotland, Peers are elected at the commencement of each Parliament. There have been well-known cases in which the desire of Irish and Scotch Peers to be elected Representative Peers was persistently ignored, and similarly there ought to be some means by which British Peers might, either permanently or temporarily, remove undesirable Members. I recognize in this Bill an honest attempt to grapple with a difficult question, and I hope that for the sake of the principle underlying it the House will read the Bill a second time, and reserve all criticism of its details for the next stage in Committee.

*THE EARL OF DERBY: I must confess that when I first came into the House to-night I felt considerable doubt as to the course I should take, because I believe we all sympathize with the object of the noble Earl who has moved the Second Reading of this Bill. But the more we look into the subject, the more we feel the extreme difficulty of the grave and complicated questions which are involved. I am bound to say that I do not altogether agree with the opinion that has been expressed more than once to-night, that it is not desirable that we should deal with questions affecting the reform or the construction of this House unless we are prepared to deal with them in a large and comprehensive manner; for I am afraid that if we are to wait for a comprehensive scheme of reconstruction we may have to wait a long while. Half a loaf is better than no bread; and if we are to have practical reforms, these will probably best be effected by dealing with separate parts of the subject, not in any one comprehensive scheme, but in a variety of separate measures. Nor should I be restrained by the possibility that whatever we do here our labours will be unsuccessful. An attempt to remedy an acknowledged defect can only be to our credit, even though it should fail by no fault of ours. But I think there is a great deal of force in the argument of the noble Earl below the Gangway (the Earl of Fife), that it is not desirable to open up, by a small measure such as this, the whole question of the constitution and character of this House in another place, where it is not very likely to meet with particularly friendly criticism, for the sake of the very small result which is all that can be hoped for from this measure. In the second place, the more I look at this measure, the more I am convinced that the object we have in view—namely, the exclusion from this House of Members of disreputable character—would not be attained by it in any appreciable degree. The words of the 2nd clause are such that it is easy to imagine—not to refer to any actual cases—individuals who might bear notoriously bad characters, and be unfit to take part in the deliberations of this House, or even to be admitted to respectable society, and who yet would not come within the categories mentioned in the Bill—namely, of persons found guilty of felony or misdemeanour. The Bill would not cover many cases that required to be dealt with, and would cover many cases that were not intended to be dealt with. There are a great many technical offences which are constituted misdemeanours, but which do not involve any moral delinquency. The non-repair of a road is, I believe, under certain circumstances a misdemeanour; a person who allows his chimney to emit smoke so as to be a nuisance to the neighbourhood is also guilty of a misdemeanour, and numerous cases of a similar character may be adduced.

I do not believe that this subject can be adequately dealt with by attempts to exclude individually and by name those who are considered to be unfit, but I think rather that the method should be by giving to some body the power of choice among the whole number of Peers. In many cases, though there may be nothing proved against a Peer which would justify his exclusion from legislative functions, he may, upon moral or intellectual grounds, be quite unfitted for the duties of a legislator. In such a case it would be scarcely possible to exclude him directly; you will not alter your object by shutting out a limited number of persons, but rather by selecting from the whole body of Peers such as should exercise the right of legislation. Again, a measure of this kind ought, I think, if it goes to the House of Commons at all, to be backed by a general consensus of opinion in this House. It is quite clear that there is no general agreement in this House upon this Bill, and if we are divided among ourselves we cannot expect that our opinions would have proper weight and authority when they came to be considered by the other House. I hope, therefore, that my noble Friend will be satisfied with the discussion he has raised, and withdraw the Bill, which, in its present form, would not be likely to pass in another place, and which, if he persists with it, will place noble Lords in the dilemma of having either to vote against a measure the object of which we approve, or to vote for a measure which we do not believe will effect its purpose.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I confess I am in the same position as the noble Lord who has just sat down. I came down to this House with a disposition to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill. But I have listened very carefully to the debate which has taken place; and without wishing in any way to express any hostile opinion as to the aims and objects of my noble Friend, with which I entirely sympathize, I must say that I agree with the view of the noble Earl who has sat down, that it would be better that this Bill should not be proceeded with. I do not feel able altogether to agree with the proposition of the noble Earl below the Gangway (the Earl of Fife) that we must never deal with this question except in conjunction with the question of the general constitution of this House. I think that would be too wide a doctrine. I should prefer, if the noble Earl saw his way, that he should withdraw his amendment and allow us to divide on "the Previous Question." This seems eminently an occasion for the "Previous Question," when we do not wish to express ourselves against the principle of the Bill; but owing to many circumstances of the time and the peculiar structure of the Bill—which has been rather knocked to pieces in the course of the criticisms of the noble and learned Lord behind me (Lord Esher)—we do not think it desirable to carry the Bill to a Second Reading. And I feel this all the more because I think there is something shadowy and unreal in the operation we are going through. My noble Friend has used again those words "great scandal," and "intolerable evil," but I think that these words go very far beyond the realities of the case. I have asked again and again for a list of "the black sheep" and I have never got it, and I am getting very sceptical as to their existence. I am quite certain that we shall not get at the black sheep by this Bill except by a very liberal use of these words "or otherwise." It is not the other provisions of the Bill that will exclude black sheep, unless you add an Interpretation Clause, and recognize the Jockey Club as "a Court of competent jurisdiction." Otherwise I do not think the Bill will have any effect at all. It is impossible to say that the grievance at which it aims is a practical grievance. I only know familiarly Peers who are in the habit of coming to this House. I utterly deny there are any black sheep among them. Whether there are among the Peers who never come to this House any to whom that description may attach I do not know; but the grievance, in so far as it is not an idle and imaginary grievance, really refers to the history and the experience of past times, and aims at dealing rather with a foolish outcry than with any practical state of things. At the same time, I think it is an anomaly, and an anomaly which, at a proper time, and under suitable circumstances, I should be very glad to see removed, that we do not possess the same power in this matter as the House of Commons. I believe that the best solution of the question would be that we should place ourselves, as far as we can do in reference to this measure, precisely in the same position as the House of Commons—namely, that we should have the power of expelling Members, subject to having them put back here by the authority that sends us here. Just as, in the case of the House of Commons, if a Member is expelled, he can be put back by his constituents, so in the House of Lords, if a Peer is expelled, there should be power in the Crown to put him back here. But I do not believe that we are aiming at an urgent grievance, and so I do not ask your Lordships to proceed with the Bill now. I confess, though I do not agree with his doctrine in all its entirety, I was very much struck by the argument of the noble Lord who moved the Amendment. I do not think it is desirable, except for some adequate reason, to subject the constitution of this House to the dissecting-knife of the House of Commons. The House of Commons have blunt methods of their own of expressing their friendly sentiments, which might interfere with the good feeling between the two Houses. As we showed last year, we are rather disposed to deal with this question as an adjunct to the general question of the constitution of the House; we have never elevated it into such importance that we should wish to deal with it alone. With regard to the general constitution of this House, I have only to say that we hear many proposals for abstract and very few for concrete reform. The noble Earl, I think, denounced Lord Melbourne for one of his observations—"Let well alone." If I mistake not, there was another observation of Lord Melbourne's which is very applicable in the present case, and that was that things were never in so much danger as when people said that something must be done. Now we have got this question rather in the position of "something must be done." Definite plans have not been very often laid before us, and, when they have been laid before us, I do not think they have attracted much support from any side of the House. For myself, I see my way no further than the importance of giving to the Crown, under certain conditions, the power of introducing Life Peers into the House. I believe that would be a very considerable improvement to the constitution of the House and the conduct of our debates, and I should be very glad indeed if I saw any chance of this being carried into effect. But in the present state of Parliamentary Business and the disposition with respect to the forwarding of it which is being manifested by those who hold the forces of obstruction in their hands, I cannot honestly say that I see any prospect of bringing such an attempt to a successful conclusion, and therefore I do not think it is desirable we should enter upon a controversy so fraught with difficulty. Under the circumstances I have only to repeat that I think the best way to deal with this Bill is not to read it a second time, though I should be very glad to be spared the necessity of appearing to record my vote against the principle it contains.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, I should not have troubled your Lordships with any observations but for what has fallen from the noble Lord who moved the Amendment and from the noble Marquess opposite. I quite agree with what has been said as to the delicacy and difficulty of dealing with this subject, though I cannot quite assent to the view that it purports to deal with an entirely imaginary and unsubstantial grievance. Undoubtedly, there is a good deal of ill-founded and unjust criticism with regard to this House; but, certainly, when we find that under the existing practice an individual whose conduct and character may be of the most discreditable and even criminal description is, nevertheless, as potent in this House, by recording his vote, as the most honourable Member of it, I think that state of things can hardly be called an imaginary evil. If it be possible, without introducing greater evils, we all desire to get rid of any well-founded subject of criticism. Therefore, I think the noble Lord opposite, especially considering what was done in this matter during last Session, was well justified in bringing this measure before your Lordships' notice. I agree that if you are to get rid of what your Lordships wish to see excluded, it can only be done by delegation or selection. Nor should I be hostile to this measure on the ground that it might provoke unfriendly criticism in the House of Commons. No doubt there have been criticisms, and there are likely to be criticisms, which many of us consider exceed the bounds of justice; but if we are not strong enough to stand well-founded criticism elsewhere, we must be in a weak and unstable condition, and I should be sorry to admit that we could not stand the criticism of the other House of Parliament. My special object in rising was this—that it has been laid down as clear and unquestionable that your Lordships' House has no power of expelling Members in cases in which it would be open to the other House to do so. I am not going to lay down the contrary of that proposition; it would require more consideration and more examination than I have given to the matter to justify me in doing so; but I feel bound to say that I am not satisfied that that power does not exist. The power of expelling for grave offences in the House of Commons rests on no Statute; it is inherent in the Assembly. True, Members of the House of Commons are chosen by constituencies in obedience to a Writ issued by the Crown, while your Lordships' House is summoned together by Writ of Summons, but at the moment I am not prepared to admit that that distinction in any way shows that this House has not inherent in it, just as the House of Commons has inherent in it under similar circumstances, the power of expelling Members who bring disgrace and discredit upon it. It may be worthy of your Lordships' consideration whether we might not inquire how far that power does exist in this House which is possessed by the House of Commons; but I felt bound to make these observations to your Lordships after what was said by the noble and learned Lord.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: My Lords, I confess that I am in the same position of perplexity as a considerable number of those who have already addressed your Lordships. I sympathize warmly with the object my noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Carnarvon) has at heart, and I sympathize at least equally warmly with my noble Friend behind me (the Earl of Fife) in the Resolution he has put forward. Nor have I heard any trumpet give a very certain sound in this debate except the speech of the noble Earl who brought forward the Bill. More especially has been my confusion increased by the speech of the noble Marquess who leads this House. He is going to oppose the Second Reading; but it will require a microscopic examination of the Bill of the noble Earl to discover what are the essential differences between that Bill and the Bill which the noble Marquess laid on the Table last year. Let us take another point. The noble Marquess does not approve the contention of the noble Earl behind me that this is not a subject which ought to be dealt with separately; but again last year the noble Marquess presented twin Bills, one of which bore a remarkable resemblance to the Bill of the noble Earl, and the other of which dealt with the constitution of your Lordships' House. When, owing to untoward circumstances in another place, one of those Bills was withdrawn, the noble Earl made a special appeal to the noble Marquess that the second innocent might at least be saved from the massacre; but the noble Marquess sternly said that he would not deal with the question of black sheep apart from the question of the constitution of your Lordships' House. It does put a simple and innocent and confiding and perplexed Peer like myself in an awkward position when he finds his natural guide and pastor in a position of difficulty. Then there was another speech which did not tend to assist me. The Master of the Rolls pointed out, by a series of detailed instances, how very dangerous this Bill might be to any of your Lordships who went into a witness-box. The contention, as I understood it, was this—that your Lordships might make a slip in the accuracy of your evidence, and might, after leaving the Court, find the doors of this House eternally closed against you. My fear is the reverse. My fear is not that it will operate so extensively or so injuriously as the Master of the Rolls suggests; my fear is that it will scarcely have any operation at all. The noble Viscount has made some very sound remarks on the principle of delegation. He said that by delegation we could get rid of this evil, and by delegation alone. He illustrated this by the case of the Scottish and Irish Peerages, and he said that it worked well in those cases, and that in both instances it had operated to remove unworthy Peers from sitting in this House. I can understand how that can be in the case of the Scotch Peers; but how that can be in the case of the

Irish Peerage, where the Peers are admitted for life, is an additional perplexity to the many others which harass me at this moment. As regards the general question, I believe that reformers in this House are divided into three distinct categories. There are those who wish the utmost possible reform; there are those who wish for the least possible reform; and, in the third place, there are those who wish for no reform at all. I shall do the noble Earl who introduced the Bill no injustice in putting him in the second class. It has been my melancholy experience to see the noble Marquess begin in the first class and gradually descend through the second into the third. I think my noble Friend behind me (the Earl of Fife) is, like myself, an ardent and convinced Member of the first class. When we come to consider how ardent and convinced reformers are to be benefited by this Bill, we find ourselves in a position of some considerable difficulty. Those Peers on whom a Judge shall have pronounced a sentence, or as to whom a Judge shall have to report as provided in the Bill, are Peers who can never in those circumstances attend the Sittings of this House, for in these days so gross a public scandal would be practically impossible. Therefore, if you pass this Bill, you might in a case of a very flagrant nature move an Address to the Crown and keep out a Peer, whose entry again into this House would be practically impossible; but does it really touch the matter at issue going beyond that? Is the object which our reformers have at heart simply to keep out the black sheep, the Peers guilty of flagrant felonies and misdemeanours? It is nothing of the kind. There are a great many offences—scarcely offences at all in the eye of the law—which unfit a Peer to sit here or legislate here. There are offences for which a Peer would be expelled by the committee of a club at a moment's notice which do not come under the operation of this Bill, which would be almost more repulsive to your Lordships than any offences that do come under the Bill. When we come to deal with the action that should be taken, we find what our difficulties are. Some propose a Censor. I once took the liberty of suggesting that we should have a Censor, and that if we did have a Censor he should be the noble Duke, whom I do not see present (the Duke of Argyll), who is well qualified to perform those functions; but that, again, is not a practical suggestion. Well, can we have expurgation by ballot? That, again, would seem a natural way to get rid of those Peers who are undesirable; but who would be the Peers to be got rid of? I am sorry to say that from all that I have seen of the proceedings of this House for the last two years I am led to believe that the first ballot would be not against the black sheep, but against myself and my noble Friends who sit on the front Opposition Bench. Then, when we come to the definition of black sheep, there is a difficulty there again. If Sir Wilfrid Lawson were asked to define the black sheep he would define them as the men who took too much wine, and I believe the definition which would be given by the strict teetotaller of the blackest sheep of all would be the moderate drinker. I have seen a Catechism framed by members of the Church of England which lays it down as almost a mortal sin to enter Dissenting places of worship. The noble Marquess the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire pointed out on the last occasion on which we discussed this Bill that any person who had been twice on a racecourse should be unfit to sit in this House. When you come to your category of offences and the persons committing them you find an insuperable difficulty which can have only one issue. The real difficulty in your path has been ignored this evening. The difficulty is the hereditary condition of this House. I do not wish to speak offensively, but these are the only words by which I can describe what I mean. This House is not an ordinary Legislative Body such as exists elsewhere in the universe. It is a legislative caste, constantly recruited, I grant, constantly renewed by the exertions of the noble Marquess and those who have preceded him in office, but still a legislative caste; and the measures which are sufficient to deal with an elective body are not sufficient to deal with a hereditary body. My Lords, the painful truth is this—to put it as decorously as I can—that a person of very indifferent character who comes to a Legislative Body by the process of popular election has a safer position than a person of unimpeachable character who comes to a

House by hereditary descent. Our duty, therefore, is a singularly complicated one. We have not merely to take the steps which the House of Commons may take, and which we are told we have not the power to take, but we have to keep absolutely pure, unspotted, and untainted, free from any possibility of suspicion of taint, the hereditary constitution of this Assembly. The Bill of my noble Friend will not do that, nor, indeed, is it possible. His position, which is the reverse of the parable, is this—that he is constructing an elaborate crane to remove a large single beam, whereas what we are suffering from is an innumerable multitude of motes. There are three courses open to us. There is the course open of voting for my noble Friend opposite; there is the course open of voting for my noble Friend below the Gangway (the Earl of Fife), but I not feel inclined to adopt either. I feel in the position of a man who says, "Any port in a storm." And the port I select on this occasion would be the inquiry by Select Committee which has been suggested by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) to ascertain if we have or have not the power possessed by the House of Commons. If we have, it will render the Bill of my noble Friend unnecessary, whereas if we have not the power we may come then to the reconsideration of the subject with renewed freshness and vitality.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I am sure we shall all agree that many of the arguments used by the noble Earl who introduced this Bill are weighty and excellent arguments which cannot be contradicted. I fear, on the other hand, that the noble Earl who moved the Amendment very courteously administered a mild reproof to some Peers older than himself for the course they have taken in this matter; but I cannot help thinking that his principal argument—to the effect that the reform of the House of Lords is very desirable and so important that it should be introduced and pushed forward in the most effectual manner, and that it is injured instead of advanced by petty dealing with the question—is very much the policy, right or wrong, which, owing to the over-caution of old age, has been the policy of some of the older Peers upon whom he animadverted. Now, with regard to the Bill itself, arguments have been addressed to your Lordships in favour of and against the Bill; and I think that, as not infrequently happens, the speeches of the learned Lords in this House have to-night had more practical importance than those of lay Lords. The noble and learned Lord opposite me (Lord Esher) advanced criticisms, some of them of a startling character, others with respect merely to minor details of the Bill. The noble and learned Lord below me (Lord Fitz Gerald), while arguing strongly in favour of the Bill, laid down positively the doctrine that there is no power in this House to get rid of its delinquent Members. Now, any *obiter dictum* of the noble and learned Lord must have great weight, but it is notable that he gave no reasons or argument in support of his proposition. He was followed by my noble and learned Friend the late Lord Chancellor, who, without laying down positively and dogmatically any proposition upon the subject, pointed out that, in his opinion, it is exceedingly open to doubt whether this Assembly, like all similar bodies, had not such a power inherent in itself. My Lords, I think that, especially after what has fallen from the noble Lord who has just sat down, who so justly has taken the lead with regard to the reform of the House of Lords, my noble Friend opposite (the Earl of Carnarvon) will see that any Bill for the reform of your Lordships' House ought to go down to another place with very great authority and very great support from this House. It is said that the House of Commons, if this Bill went down to it, would take advantage of that opportunity of discussing the constitution of this House. I have no right to speak for any of the Conservative Party in the other House; but I have no doubt that there is a considerable portion of that Party in the other House who do not like the principle of reforming this House, because they think that if such a reform were once begun, it would tend ultimately to destroy an institution which they wish to perserve. On the other hand, there are in the other House honourable Friends of mine on the same political side as myself who would be no party to any measures that would strengthen the House of Lords. I think, after the difference of opinion there has been

Classifications of Merchandize and Schedules of Maximum Rates submitted by Railway Companies under Section 34 of "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888"?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, Bristol, W.): I presume the noble Lord refers to the Railway and Canal Traders' Association, from whom I have received copies of Resolutions objecting to the proposed classifications and schedules of the chief Railway Companies, in which the phrases quoted are used. I have, however, not seen the observations of the Chairman. The Resolutions are under consideration, and the Executive of the Association have had an opportunity of explaining their views upon them. With regard to the last paragraph of the question, and a similar question which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for East Norfolk, and which at my request he has postponed for some days, I may say that I have been reluctant to extend the time allowed for sending in objections to the proposed new classification and rates, because any such extension will make it quite impossible that the matter can be settled this year. But I have found so general a desire for an extension of time among traders and agriculturists in all parts of the country that, feeling the importance of full consideration of a matter which has to be settled once for all, I have decided to extend the time for eight weeks—namely, to June 3rd.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask if the President of the Board of Trade can give any idea as to the costs an individual trader might incur in lodging objections and taking procedure, as provided by the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, to protect his interests; and whether, in view of the unanimous opinion expressed at all the meetings held throughout the country, the Government will now agree to extend the time for lodging objections, which was fixed by the Act to expire on April 9 next, to June 9 next?

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: As far as the Board of Trade are concerned, no costs need be incurred by any person making objections with which they are empowered to deal. It is obviously impossible to give any idea as to the costs which may be incurred by persons lodging objections with the Railway Commissioners.

THE POLICE.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he was aware that, on the 21st January, Alfred Smith, of 4, Emerald Street, being aroused by cries of "murder," came out of his house, and found Police Constable Kendal beating a young man; whether Alfred Smith, to prevent serious result, took away the policeman's truncheon; whether, on 29th January, Alfred Smith was for this fined 12s. and costs by Mr. Vaughan, on a charge of obstructing the constable; whether Alfred Smith was further summoned, on 7th February, for detaining the truncheon, and whether such summons was, after careful hearing, dismissed by Sir J. Ingham, the truncheon having been shown to have been laid on the doorstep; whether Alfred Smith was now sued in the County Court by the Receiver General of the Metropolitan Police for £1 2s., as the actual value of such truncheon; whether he would state the price per truncheon really paid by the Government; and whether these repeated proceedings had been taken with his consent?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that he has no knowledge of the fact stated in the first paragraph. A man assaulted P. C. Kendal and another constable, and has been fined by the Magistrates for these assaults. Smith took away the policeman's truncheon, and was fined as stated in the third paragraph. The Chief Commissioner is not aware that the truncheon was laid on the doorstep. The summons mentioned in the fourth paragraph was dismissed on the 7th February, the learned Magistrate remarking—

> "That he did so because the police were unable to prove that the truncheon was in the possession of Smith when the summons was applied for, and that the proper course was to sue Smith in the County Court."

Accordingly Smith has now been sued in the County Court for the value of the truncheon—namely, 2s., and for £1 damages for illegal detention of the same. The price of the truncheon was

2s. The sanction of the Secretary of State was not asked for, nor was it necessary with reference to any of these proceedings, which were all taken in the ordinary course of law.

ARMY STORES AT WEEDON.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War what was the quantity of the various small arms and tents in the warehouse of the Government Army Stores at Weedon recently destroyed by fire; what was the quantity saved; and, whether, judging from previous stocktakings, and the fact that it was full in nearly every department, there was between £90,000 and £120,000 worth of Government property in the building?

*The SECRETARY for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): At the time of the fire the Weedon warehouse contained about £130,000 worth of stores, consisting mainly of tents, swords, and lances. About £62,000 worth of these were destroyed.

RICHMOND PRISON, DUBLIN.

Mr. HANBURY asked the Secretary of State for War what precautions were taken, and what alterations were made in the sanitary arrangements of Richmond Prison, Dublin, between the time when it was disused as a prison and the time when it was first occupied by troops, when it was so disused by prisoners and when it was first used by troops?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE said: The Richmond Prison was vacated by prisoners on the 31st of March, 1888, and occupied as Wellington Barracks by troops on the 28th of September following. During the intervening half-year all water-closets and drains connected with them were removed from the interior of the building and replaced by earth-closets outside. Windows were enlarged, and additional provision made for ablution and cooking. The sanitary arrangements were concurred in by the medical authorities. These works having been carried out, I authorized the use of the buildings as a barrack for temporary purposes.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked whether, when those barracks were taken over by the military authorities, any sum was paid to the Civil Service?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: No, Sir; I believe not.

THE MACCLESFIELD SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the report of the trial of the actuary or clerk who embezzled the funds of the Macclesfield Savings Bank, at which trial the Judge, in passing sentence, severely commented upon the carelessness and negligence of the trustees and managers; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Government will order an inquiry under the Act of 1887?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): Before the hon. Member's question appeared on the Paper, the Treasury had received a report from the National Debt Commissioners calling attention to the defalcations at the Macclesfield Savings Bank, and recommending that an inquiry should be held under the Act of 1887. The Treasury are of opinion that an investigation is called for by the circumstances, and the Treasury Solicitor will be instructed to make an application to the High Court to appoint a Commissioner to hold a local inquiry, as was done in the case of the Cardiff Bank.

CAPTAIN SEGRAVE, R.M.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the President of the Board of Trade what inquiries were made as to the antecedents of Mr. Segrave, and his competence to fill a judicial office, on his appointment as a Resident Magistrate in October 1886; were the Irish Government aware that Mr. Segrave had three times failed to obtain by examination a Commission in the Army, and that on two of these three occasions he had failed to pass a qualifying examination; and, were the Government aware that in September 1885 Mr. Segrave's services in the Cape Forces had been dispensed with, as appears by the *Cape Gazette*, he having been previously placed under arrest for the embezzlement of money belonging to soldiers under his command?

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I am obliged to the hon. Member for asking me this question, as it gives me an opportunity of stating that any responsibility rests with me, and not at all with the present Chief Secretary for Ireland. I can only speak as to the circumstances of that appointment from my recollection of a matter which took place two and a half years ago, but I am quite sure that I gave very great personal attention to the inquiry into the testimonials which must have been produced by Captain Segrave, both by letter and oral, and I referred the testimonials to the Lord Chancellor for his consideration with regard to the judicial qualifications of Captain Segrave. Of course the points referred to in the second and third paragraphs of the hon. Member's question were not in any way brought under my notice. On the contrary, Captain Segrave was recommended to me as a Roman Catholic gentleman, whose claims to such an appointment had been favourably looked upon by Lord Aberdeen, and whose record of service at the Cape was a good one. If the statements in the second and third paragraphs are true, it is obvious that I was deceived.

MR. MAC NEILL asked whether the testimonials were genuine?

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: Yes, Sir, they were perfectly genuine.

MR. MAC NEILL: No forgeries?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. SEXTON asked whether the papers, including the testimonials and correspondence, connected with this appointment would be laid on the Table?

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I have already stated that I only speak from recollection. My difficulty is that testimonials are never, as I believe considered as official documents. They remain with the Chief Secretary, to whom they may be addressed, and I have been unable, after careful search, to lay my hand on those documents.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies on what date a communication was first sent by the Colonial Office to the Government of Cape Colony respecting the charges made in this House on 19th December, 1888, against Captain Segrave, R.M., and the date on which any reply was received from the Government of Cape Colony?

BARON HENRY DE WORMS: The first communication made by the Colonial Office to the Cape Government was sent by the mail on the 4th of January, that being the first mail which left after the 29th of December, on which day the Secretary of State was requested by the Irish Office to make inquiry into the allegations made against Captain Segrave. Not receiving a reply from the Cape Government, the Secretary of State, at the request of the Irish Office, telegraphed on the 16th, and again on the 19th, and yesterday the following reply was received—

"Cape Town, March 19th.—Referring to your telegram of the 16th of March, Ministers inform me that Lieutenant Segrave was in July, 1885, dismissed from the Cape Infantry for gross neglect and breach of trust."

An hon. MEMBER: "Remember Mitchelstown!"

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): In the absence of the Chief Secretary, I will ask the First Lord of the Treasury the question which I asked the other night, whether in this Vote on Account is included the salary of Mr. Segrave, who, I believe, was the magistrate at Mitchelstown.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand): My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will be in his place in a few minutes, and will be able to answer the question of the right hon. Gentleman.

THE OUTRAGE ON MR. AND MISS CREAGH.

MR. COX (Clare, E.), asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the police had made any arrests in connection with the outrage on Mr. and Miss Creagh, near Quin, on Sunday, 10th inst.; whether it was a fact that the entire police force of the district, numbering eight constables, were, at the time the outrage was perpetrated, stationed at the gates of Clooney Catholic Church, within less than one mile of the scene of the outrage—and, if so, would he inform the House with what object the police were posted there; whether his attention had been directed to the letter of the Rev. D. A. Hogan, C.C., Honorary Secretary Quin and Clooney National League, in the *Freeman's Journal* of 15th inst., denouncing the outrage on behalf of his parishioners; and whether, in view of this statement, the police had reason to believe that the outrage was agrarian.

Was the right hon. Gentleman aware that an indignation meeting had been held in the parish to denounce the outrage upon this gentleman?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): The Constabulary Authorities report that so far no arrests have been made in connection with the firing upon Mr. and Miss Creagh. It is not the fact that the entire police force of the district was engaged as alleged in the second paragraph. The men of one station attended Clooney Chapel as usual, and after Divine Service remained a short time, as placards had been posted announcing that a collection would be made in aid of the Indemnity Fund by the local branch of the National League, which was suppressed as an illegal association. Clooney Chapel is not less than one mile as alleged, but it is two miles from the scene of the outrage. I understand that the letter referred to did appear in the newspaper. The police have reason to believe that the outrage was agrarian. As a matter of fact, this has been the third occasion on which Mr. Creagh was fired at since he evicted a tenant in 1871.

THE ROBERTTOWN BOARD SCHOOL.

MR. WOODHEAD (York, W.R., Spen Valley) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the inspector of schools for the district had on two successive years reported that the Board School at Roberttown, Liversedge, Yorkshire, does not afford sufficient accommodation for the children in attendance, and whether the Board has been threatened with a withdrawal of the grant if the accommodation be not increased; whether the plans prepared for the enlargement of the building, with a view to obtaining a loan, were submitted to the Education Department in September last, and provisionally approved by them; whether the plans have since been returned to the Board, with an intimation that, unless the additional accommodation proposed to be made were reduced by 26 places, the sanction of the Department would be withheld; whether the Board thereupon ascertained, and reported to the Department, that the proposed reduction would effect a saving of only £18, and would also occasion serious inconvenience as regards the mixed department, and, therefore, asked the Department to reconsider its objection to the proposed plans; whether it was in consequence of the representations of the Vicar of Roberttown that the Department has withdrawn its approval of the plans, and continued to insist on the proposed reduction of accommodation; and whether, in view of the fact that the inhabitants have, in public meeting, expressed their approval of the Board's plans, and of the proposed expenditure, the Department will, for the sake of a saving of only £18, involving the sacrifice of 26 places, continue to insist on an alteration of the plans before sanctioning a loan?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART-DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The facts as stated in the first three paragraphs are correct. The Department are not prepared to admit that 26 places would cost only £18 or that the reduction would cause inconvenience. The reduction of the places was caused not by the representations of the Vicar, but by the fact that the school, including the enlargement now sanctioned, would supply sufficient accommodation. The last paragraph rests upon a misapprehension. The Department have no power to sanction a loan for building on the security of the Rates, unless, to use the words of the Statute, they are satisfied that the amount of accommodation is required for the educational wants of the District. The Department are not satisfied of this, and therefore they cannot alter their decision. But the School Board are themselves at liberty, without the sanction of the Department, to spend what they please out of the Rates.

CATHOLIC MAGISTRATES.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether it was a fact that there was no Catholic Magistrate resident in the Petty Sessions of Castlemartyr; upon what grounds did Lord Bandon recommend Messrs. Green and Dring to the Lord Chancellor to be lately appointed to vacancies on the Bench in this district; is Mr. Green an Englishman, having no property in the district; does Mr. Dring own any property in the district; were the names of some suitable Catholic gentlemen submitted to Lord Bandon for those vacancies; and whether, as there was not a single Catholic Magistrate in the contiguous Petty Sessions Districts of Youghal and Castlemartyr, he would recommend the Lord Chancellor to favourably consider a direct memorial from each of those districts?

Mr. MADDEN: I am informed that in 1881 a Roman Catholic gentleman who resided in Castlemartyr was appointed to the Commission of the Peace for County Cork. This gentleman now resides temporarily elsewhere, but during the last two years he has attended Petty Sessions on several occasions. Messrs. Green and Dring were in 1881 recommended for the Commission of the Peace by Lord Bandon, on the ground that they were fit and proper persons to be appointed. I have no information as to whether Mr. Green was or was not an Englishman, but the fact of his being an Englishman would be no disqualification. Mr. Green resides in the district, and is possessed in right of his wife of landed property there. Mr. Dring is the only son and heir of a gentleman 80 years of age, and possessed of an estate in the district. Mr. Dring acts as his father's agent and manager. I have no information as to whether the names of any Catholic gentlemen were submitted to the Lord Chancellor, but the desire of Lord Bandon is simply to secure the appointment of fit and proper persons.

THE PONSONBY ESTATE.

Mr. LANE asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the Cork Grand Jury had given the Land Corporation £175 for the alleged malicious burning of some mud-built houses on the Ponsonby Estate, the amount to be levied off the parish of Clonpriest; whether he would inform the House why compensation was granted to this association and not to the owner of the property; was the house occupied at the time of the burning by emergency men and police; and did one of the policemen claim and receive a sum of £22 10s. from the Grand Jury for money which he alleges he lost in the fire?

Mr. MADDEN: I understand that the Cork Grand Jury have given the Land Corporation £175 for the burning of houses on the Ponsonby Estate, the amount to be levied off the parish of Clonpriest, and that no compensation could be granted to the owner of the land, as he made no application. The Land Corporation were at the time in occupation of the houses in question. The house was occupied by police and emergency men at the time it was burned; one of the policemen claimed and received £22 10 from the Grand Jury for a watch and money which he lost in the fire.

Mr. LANE: Were the Land Corporation asked if they were the owners or tenants of the property or had any interest, and did they decline to answer?

Mr. MADDEN: I have no reason to believe that there was anything illegal in the transaction.

Mr COX: Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware of the extent to which the Land Corporation was interested in the matter.

Mr. MADDEN: No.

FAIR RENTS.

Mr. LALOR (Queen's County, Leix) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland, in view of the fact that in the Abbeylaix Union many hundreds of originating notices to fix fair rents, which were served in September and October 1887 under the Act of that year, have not yet been heard, and in view of the fact that many landlords are still exacting the old rents can he say when the Sub-Commissioners will sit in that Union to hear these cases?

*Mr. MADDEN: The Land Commissioners inform me that a Sub-Commission sat in the Abbeyleix Union in September last, at which sitting nearly one hundred of the cases in which notices were received from 22nd August, 1887, were disposed of. The total number of cases unheard in the Union at the present date, including those not disposed of at that sitting, is 352. The Commissioners are at present unable to fix the date of the next sitting, having regard to the claims of other districts.

CYPRUS AND THE TURKISH TRIBUTE.

Colonel BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, having regard to the statement he made in the House on the 26th November, 1888, it was the intention of the Government, during the present Session, to make any arrangement for the commutation of the Turkish tribute paid by Cyprus?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I am not in a position to add anything to the statement which I made on the 26th of November, to which the hon. Member refers. Diplomatic as well as financial considerations are involved which surround the question with a variety of difficulties.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND.

MR. JOHN ELLIS asked the Solicitor General for Ireland how often the Lord Chancellor had sat in the Irish Court of Appeal within the past 12 months in cases in which Divisional or Resident Magistrates were parties; whether the decision of the Appeal Court in each case was in favour of the magistrate; and was there any precedent in England for a Member of the Cabinet sitting as Lord Chancellor in the Court of Appeal in cases of like nature?

*MR. MADDEN: The Lord Chancellor of Ireland is, under the Judicature Act, the statutable President of the Court of Appeal. This Court has no jurisdiction in criminal cases, and can only hear cases conversant with civil rights. The Lord Chancellor, like all his Predecessors, has fulfilled his duty by sitting in the Court in all cases which come before it. It would not, I submit, be proper to make inquiries of the nature suggested in the first and second paragraphs of the question. The nature and result of the cases which come before the Court can be ascertained by any person who desires it by means of the reports which ordinarily appear in the public Press. As regards the last paragraph, I have to state that the Lord Chancellor of England invariably presides in the House of Lords, without regard to who may be the parties to the cases which come before him, and (when his other duties permit) in the Privy Council and Court of Appeal.

THE MURDER OF INSPECTOR MARTIN.

MR. JOHN ELLIS asked the Solicitor General for Ireland what number of persons arrested by the constabulary in the Gweedore district for alleged complicity in the murder of District Inspector Martin have since been released; in how many of the cases was the arrest made by warrant; and against how many of them had there been information sworn?

*MR. MADDEN: The Constabulary authorities report that 44 persons have been arrested in connection with the murder of District Inspector Martin. Twenty-three of these were subsequently released, of whom, however, two have been re-arrested on further evidence. None of the arrests were made by warrant or on sworn information, but on private information received by the police.

DUBLIN BARRACKS.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's) asked the Secretary of State for War when the Report on the Sanitary Condition of Dublin Barracks, recently laid upon the Table, will be accessible to Members?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: There were several large plans connected with this report which delayed its completion; but he (Mr. Stanhope) hoped it would be out before many days.

RESULT FEES.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland if it was a fact that the Commissioners of National Education had refused to pay result fees to Mr. James Ryan, of Trooperstown National School, Rathdrum, county Wicklow, for giving instruction in agriculture, on the ground that such instruction was given both within and out of the ordinary school hours; and, if so, whether steps will be taken to award the fees for the work actually done?

*MR. MADDEN: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that it is a fact that result fees have been refused in the case in question, on the ground that the instruction had been given, contrary to rule, partly outside of school hours. The Commissioners have no power to award any result fees under the circumstances.

EXCISE DUTY.

MR. CAINE (Barrow) asked the Under Secretary of State for India (1), if it was true that there is a large brewery established at Poona by Messrs. Meakin and Co., and that under a Government Resolution, No. 34, 5th January, 1886, the malt liquor brewed in this firm is exempted from the payment of any Excise Duty, and that, under Government Resolution, No. 1,652, 2nd March 1886, a wholesale licence was granted to Messrs. Meakin and Co. for the sale of their malt liquors in Bombay for a fee of 50 rupees; (2), if it was true that there are in all 68 other wholesale licences in the town and island of Bombay charged sums varying from 100 to 1,000 rupees; (3), why was it that Messrs. Meakin and Co. pay no Excise Duty, and obtain a wholesale licence on exceptionally favourable terms; (4), were the malt liquors brewed by Messrs. Meakin and Co. the same as those described as "Government porter, of 11 per cent strength, and Government ale, 11·7 per cent strength, of proof spirit," on page 12 of the Report of the Bombay Abkari Commission, 1885; if not, can he state what is the alcoholic strength of Meakin's beer and porter; (5), was any other firm of brewers in India exempted from the payment of Excise Duty; (6), whether his attention had been called to the statement on the same page of the Report, that the tax on toddy was 6 rupees on 40 gallons in 1885, and that its alcoholic strength increases 5 per cent in 24 hours, and is he aware that large quantities of toddy are consumed freshly drawn from the tree, in which state it is entirely free from alcohol; (7), was he aware that the Duty on imported malt liquors is only one anna per gallon, while that on toddy, whether alcoholic or not, is an average of two annas per gallon; (8), was he aware that there is a widespread feeling of discontent all over the Bombay Presidency with regard to these inequalities of taxation, which found expression in the evidence given before the above-mentioned Commission, and that the Report of the Commission recommends an assimilation of the Duties on malt liquors and toddy; and (9), was it the intention of the Bombay Government to carry out this recommendation by raising the Duty on imported, and the Excise on malt liquors manufactured within their jurisdiction?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST, Chatham): (1) (2) (3) and (5). No exceptional favour is shown to Messrs. Meakin and Co. Malt liquor is not charged with Excise Duty in Bombay, nor, so far as the Secretary of State is aware, in any other Province of India. Messrs. Meakin's wholesale licence is for malt liquor only. The licences with which theirs is compared are for wines, beers, and spirits. (4) The Secretary of State cannot identify the beer and spirits mentioned as Messrs. Meakin's, nor does he know the precise alcoholic strength of their liquor. (6) (7) and (8) The Secretary of State is aware of the facts stated. (9) The Secretary of State has not been informed by the Governor of Bombay whether it is their intention to raise the duty, and establish an excise, on malt liquor.

In reply to a further question,

*SIR J. GORST said the Secretary of State was not able to identify the particular ale and porter mentioned in the report.

MR. CAINE: Do not the Government buy their ale and porter from Messrs. Meakin and Co.?

*SIR J. GORST: I must have notice of that question.

THE SUBMARINE COMPANY'S EMPLOYES.

MR. PINKERTON (Galway) asked the Postmaster General if he could state whether the Submarine Company's employés would be placed upon the permanent establishment or not when that Company's telegraphs were taken over by the Government?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the honourable Member, I have to state that most of the Submarine Telegraph Company's employés will be placed upon the permanent establishment when that Company's telegraphs are transferred to the Post Office.

PARLIAMENTARY PRINTING.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanarkshire, N.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury how it happened that the printing of the House was done on such terms as to be almost beyond the endurance of man; and, if Her Majesty's Government could see their way to introduce an Eight Hours' Clause into all contracts for printing done for the House?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I presume that the hon. Member refers not to the printing of the Votes and Proceedings, but to the printing of Reports and Papers.

This is done under a contract which, in accordance with directions given by Resolutions passed by the House of Commons in 1882 on the recommendation of a joint Select Committee of both Houses, was submitted to competition in 1886. There is always great pressure at the opening of the Sessions of Parliament, owing to the amount of printing required for Accounts and Papers, and especially for the Estimates. I do not think that so long as the system of making contracts by open competition is maintained, the Government can interfere between contractors and their workmen, either by insisting on an eight hours' rule, or in any other manner.

MR. HOWELL asked whether the hon. Gentleman admitted that the work was done under intolerable circumstances?

MR. JACKSON did not admit that. In the answer which he gave the other day he said that the printers had been working under great pressure, and almost to the utmost of their endurance. He believed that to have been the fact, but from, circumstances over which he had no control, he did not think it could be remedied under the present system.

THE INLAND REVENUE.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is proposed to abolish the office of Collector of Inland Revenue at Great Winchester Street, in the City of London, and to transfer the main portion of his duties to the office of the Receiver General at Somerset House; if so, what increase of staff will be necessary in the latter office; is it intended to raise the salary of the Receiver General; will any officers be retired on pensions as a consequence of the abolition; if so, how many, and what will be the total annual charge for their pensions; what is the net saving, if any, which will be effected by the change; what is the amount of Excise and Income Tax now collected annually at Great Winchester Street; and, have representations reached him that great inconvenience will be caused to persons in the City and East End who have hitherto transacted their business at that office?

*MR. GOSCHEN: A plan is now under the consideration of the Board of Inland Revenue for transferring a part of the work at present done in the office of the Collector of Inland Revenue, at Great Winchester Street, to the Receiver General. The scheme involves no increase of staff, though it may involve a transfer from one office to the other. No question has been raised of increasing the salary of the Receiver General. If the scheme is adopted, no officers will be retired on pensions in consequence of it. It is impossible as yet to say what would be the amount of the saving; but, of course, the scheme will only be adopted if it leads to economy. The amount of Excise and Income Tax collected at the office in question was about £2,800,000 for the year ending the 31st of December. No representations have been made to me that inconvenience will be caused by the proposed scheme. There will still be an office in Great Winchester Street, and an official authorized to receive taxes, though part of the work now done in the office might be transferred to the Receiver General.

TRADE WAGES.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.) asked the Postmaster General whether his attention had been drawn to the case of George Hotson, Harry Johnson, George Graves, and Samuel Andrews, recently employed in the leather department of the Postal Telegraph Stores in Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, who received notice to leave their employment in consequence of having notified to Mr. Montgomery, the yard foreman, that they were working under the minimum wage of their trade; whether it was a fact that the wages received by them at the time was 25s. and 26s. for 54 hours' labour per week; whether Henry Hunt, who was preparing the work for them at the time, and expressed his sympathy with their object, had since received notice to leave; whether it was a fact that Mr. Montgomery, the yard foreman, is in receipt of a Government pension of £1 per week, and a weekly salary of £3 10s. as yard foreman; and whether he would see that in future the workmen employed in this department are paid the minimum rate of wage of the trade society of 28s. per week?

*Mr. RAIKES: Two of the four men first mentioned by the hon. Member, viz., Hotson and Johnson, were taken over from the late contractor's service, at their own request, at their existing wages of 25s. a week. Within a week they applied for 26s. a week, and were informed that any increase must depend upon their skill and industry. They then resigned. Graves, who had been employed for about three months at wages of 26s. a week, also resigned. Andrews' services were discontinued because he had not proved a satisfactory workman. The hours of labour assigned to all these men, who are leather stitchers, were 54 a week. It is believed that the regular trade wages for this class of work are 25s. a week, and a large number of men have applied for employment at this rate. As regards Hunt, who did superior work, and received wages of 28s. a week, I find that he had given much dissatisfaction by his late attendance, and his services were, therefore, dispensed with. Mr. Montgomery, the yard foreman, has an army pension of 19s. 4½d. a week, and is in the receipt of a salary from the Post Office of £160 a year. As regards the last question, I beg to say that, while it will always be my intention to pay fair wages for work done, it would not be consistent with my public duty to pledge myself to pay any particular rate of wages to workmen employed in the Post Office Factories.

IRELAND—PRISON DISCIPLINE.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether he was able to state to the House the names of the Gentlemen whom he is going to appoint to investigate the rules of prison discipline, with a view to their modification in certain cases; and, whether, pending their Report, he would see that no prisoner in Ireland undergoing a sentence for offences against the Criminal Law and Procedure Act will be punished by solitary confinement or bread and water diet for the non-performance of menial offices, or for refusing to take exercise with criminals found guilty under other Acts?

*Mr. MADDEN: I am not yet in a position to make any statement on behalf of the Government on the subject of this question; but I may say the Government are in communication with representatives of the English, Scotch, and Irish prison departments with the view of forming an opinion on the points raised in the speech of the Chief Secretary on Wednesday. With regard to the second paragraph of the hon. Member's question, it is not the view of the Irish Government that Crimes Act prisoners, as such, are entitled to any relaxation of prison rules.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Will the inquiry be conducted entirely by writing, or will evidence be taken?

*Mr. MADDEN: I am unable to give an answer to the question, but the whole matter will receive careful consideration. I am not able to say yet what the course of procedure will be.

Mr. O'CONNOR: Are we to understand that no change will be made in the condition of the prisoners in Ireland pending the result of the inquiry?

Mr. MADDEN: I have not stated that no change will be made pending inquiry.

Mr. SEXTON: Have the Government yet resolved to apply Section 11 of the Act of 1887 to the whole of the inquiry including the treatment of Mr. William O'Brien?

*Mr. MADDEN: The right hon. Gentleman will kindly give me notice of the question.

THE POST OFFICE.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR asked the Postmaster General why the allowance for risk money to the officers of the travelling post offices in Ireland when dealing with registered letters, which the Postmaster General stated, on the 4th December, 1888, he had granted, was not yet paid, and if he intends paying back money for the two years he has had it under consideration?

*Mr. RAIKES: The reason of the delay to which the hon. Member refers is that, in order to introduce uniformity of treatment, inquiry has to be made into the work of every travelling sorter in the United Kingdom. But I can promise that, before long, payment shall begin to be made and that when made it shall date on, and from, the 1st of December last.

EAST AFRICA.

Mr. JAMES MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Under Secretary of State for

Foreign Affairs if any memorial has been received from British-Indian subjects of the Queen in East Africa praying that they may be compensated for losses caused by the disturbances in the German Protectorate; and, if so, what action the Foreign Office has taken thereupon; and, if it is proposed to lay whatever correspondence has passed upon the Table of the House?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): A Memorial from British-Indians in East Africa was received by telegraph on the 12th of October, praying Her Majesty's Government to take early measures to stay further loss upon their trade and destruction to their property. It contained no request for compensation. There is no correspondence ont he subject which could usefully be laid.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Cannot the right hon. Baronet say whether in view of the admitted loss to British subjects the Government are making any inquiry to ascertain if any course can be taken to protect them?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, Sir. What Her Majesty's Government do is to warn British subjects on the coast of any pending event which may render their residence there dangerous, but they cannot possibly guard them against acts of war with which they have nothing to do.

ARMY AND NAVY MEDICAL OFFICERS.

MR. SEXTON asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of England are severally represented on the Committee of Inquiry as to the pay, status, and conditions of service of Medical Officers of the Army and Navy, but that neither the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland nor the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland have been accorded any representation on the Committee; whether the President and Council of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland have requested to be allowed to nominate a member to serve on the Committee, and have represented that the College received its charter for the purpose of providing a sufficient number of properly educated surgeons for the service of the Army; that it has fully carried out that function, and that the omission to provide representation for the College on the Committee is felt as a slur upon the College, and threatens injury to the interest of the several medical schools of Ireland; and that they wish to be represented when the important questions come to be decided by the Committee which will affect the interests of the Army Medical Officers who have been educated and qualified in Ireland; and, whether, having regard to this state of facts, he will allow to the two Irish Colleges the same representation which has been given unasked to the two corresponding English institutions?

MR. MURPHY also asked, whether representatives of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians of England are severally appointed to the Committee of Inquiry into the pay, status, and conditions of service of the Medical Officers of the Army and Navy; whether the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, have applied that a representative from that College should also be appointed to the Committee; whether a very large proportion, if not a majority, of the Medical Officers of the Army were educated in the Irish schools; whether representations have reached him that a refusal to comply with the request of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, will be considered as a slur upon the position of the Irish as compared with the English Colleges, to whom representation on the Committee was conceded unasked; and, whether the inequality will be removed by appointing at least one representative from the medical profession in Ireland?

MR. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman has not said that each of the two English Colleges has a representative on the Commission while no Irish College has any. Is there any person on it who is a direct representative of any interest in Ireland?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: One Member is appointed by the Royal College of Surgeons in England, and the other by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

MR. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the question at all. Is there any one on the Commission who directly represents any Irish interest?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: In reply to another question I propose to give all the names.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL, (Kirkcaldy) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will lay upon the Table copy of the Bill for giving responsible government to Western Australia, which was read a second time in the West Australian Legislature at the instance of the representatives of the Government; and, whether, since there has been a dissolution in West Australia, the Secretary of State will undertake not to re-introduce the Bill till this House has had an opportunity of considering the question of alienating upwards of a million square miles of land comprised in the West Australian Territory?

Baron H. de WORMS: Her Majesty's Government cannot consent to lay on the Table the Bill as read a second time in the late Legislative Council of Western Australia as its provisions are probably now undergoing some alterations. The new Legislative Council was to assemble about the 15th instant, and no doubt the Bill has been already introduced. It would not in any case be possible for Her Majesty's Government now to direct the withdrawal of the Bill. There is, however, no question of alienating a million square miles of land; since it has been decided that if responsible Government is introduced, Her Majesty's Government is to retain control over the Crown lands within the greater half of the Colony. I may again remind the House that Imperial legislation will be required before the Colonial Act can come into operation.

DUTCH CATTLE.

Mr. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the Vice Chamberlain whether it was true that an Order in Council had been made for the free admission of Dutch cattle into Great Britain, which said Order is to come into force on the 1st of June; whether the Privy Council are perfectly satisfied that no foot and mouth disease or pleuro-pneumonia exists in Holland; and, if so, how long that country has been perfectly free from those contagious diseases; whether those diseases are prevalent in Belgium and Germany, and, if so, what precautions have been taken by the Dutch Government to prevent their re-introduction from those countries, and from thence to Great Britain?

The VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount Lewisham, Lewisham): In accordance with the fourth paragraph of the fifth schedule to the Cattle Diseases Act of 1878, the Privy Council have passed the order referred to admitting Dutch cattle and sheep without being subject to slaughter at the port of landing. The Netherlands Government have satisfied the Privy Council that pleuro-pneumonia and foot and mouth disease do not exist in that country. The last case of the former was reported in 1887 (a solitary case), and of the latter in 1885. These diseases are reported to exist in Belgium and Germany; but the importation and transit of animals from other countries are prohibited by the Netherlands Government.

STAFF PAYMASTERS.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked the Secretary of State for War why Chief Paymasters are, under some alteration of rule, now to serve five instead of three years in unhealthy climates such as Hong Kong, and Staff Paymasters only four years in fine climates like Ceylon and Singapore?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: By a regulation issued last year the tour of foreign service for departmental executive officers was increased by one year, so that Staff Paymasters who used to serve three years in Ceylon, China, &c., would have to serve four years. At the same time the administrative departmental officers were placed under the rules applicable to the general staff of the Army, which involve a tour of five years' service.

BERMUDA AND HALIFAX.

Sir EDWARD WATKIN asked the Postmaster General whether any steps had yet been taken or decided upon in reference to laying a submarine cable between the British Atlantic fortress of Bermuda and the British fortress of Halifax; and, whether it was intended to restore direct postal communication by British ships between Halifax and Bermuda; and, if not, in either or both cases, what are the reasons?

*Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the Government have decided to lay a cable from Halifax to Bermuda. According to information which I have received from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Legislature of Jamaica has agreed to grant a subsidy to a line of steamers running between Halifax and Kingston, and calling regularly at Turks Islands and Bermuda. I understand that the service commenced last October.

THE COAL MINES REGULATION ACT.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case tried on the 4th instant before the West Riding Magistrates, Wakefield, Yorkshire—namely, Naylor and Company *v.* John Hudson, in the course of which it was stated by a witness named Hudson "that no person was in attendance at the pit bank during the night shift;" also that he had complained of the absence of the engineman; and that on one occasion, after repeatedly ringing the bell calling the engineman, he had to wait between two and three hours before he could get out of the pit; whether, under these circumstances, there has been a breach of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887; and if so, what course he proposes to take in relation to the same?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: The whole circumstances were before the magistrates. The proceeding was by the owners for damages against a miner for having absented himself from work without notice. The defence was that he was justified in doing so because the owners did not observe the Act, inasmuch as there was no engine man in attendance. It appeared that the engine man was at home; but his house was in communication with the pit bottom by signal. The Magistrates apparently held that the Act had been observed, and found for the plaintiffs. I think the matter should be investigated afresh, and in a more direct manner, and I have instructed the Inspector to institute a prosecution with a view to test the question.

COAL WEIGHING.

Mr. PICKARD asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has had a memorial from the Better Bed miners of the Bowling Coal and Iron Company, Bradford, Yorkshire, praying that the "mineral gotten by them shall be truly and duly weighed in accordance with 'The Mines Act, 1887;'" whether he is aware of the fact that although the men petitioned to have their mineral weighed according to the Mines Act of 1872, such provision was never put into operation, and whether, under the circumstances, he will give immediate instructions that the mineral gotten at this firm shall be "duly and truly" weighed, in accordance with the desire of the workmen and the spirit of the Act of 1887?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have received the memorial referred to, signed by eight of the workmen employed at this colliery. Fourteen years ago a petition to the same effect was presented by the workmen at these collieries, but under the circumstances of that time was not entertained. In accordance with the answer which I gave in this House last week, I propose to inquire into the circumstances of the colliery, and after ascertaining the views of the miners as well as of the owners, I shall be in a position to decide whether I ought to revoke the exemption now in force.

THE GWEEDORE PRISONERS.

Mr. MAC NEILL asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether it is a fact that the Governor of Derry Gaol refused to allow the female prisoners from Gweedore, arrested on a charge of alleged complicity in District Inspector Martin's murder, to wear warm wraps on the journey between Derry Gaol and Letterkenny, which had been provided for them by friends; and whether he will give directions that the prisoners should not be deprived of this warm clothing when travelling between Derry Gaol and Letterkenny next Saturday?

*Mr. MADDEN: The Governor of the Prison reports that he did refuse to allow certain articles of clothing sent to the prisoners to be worn by them, as he considered it would interfere with their identification, but that he has permitted them to receive warm clothing similarly sent. The General Prisons Board have instructed the Governor that if the wraps referred to are intended for the purpose of warmth they should be allowed to the prisoners while travel-

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir. Certificates of service have been granted to each of these men.

CIRCULARS AND BOOK PACKETS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General whether circulars and book packets are prohibited from being posted in unsealed envelopes at the book packet rate in the United Kingdom; and whether he is aware that this privilege is enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Continental countries?

*MR. RAIKES: My answer to both the questions of the hon. Member is in the affirmative. I may explain that printed circulars in unsealed envelopes from the Continent are admitted into this country at the book-post rate, in consequence of the provisions of the Postal Union, which makes this course obligatory. So far, however, as regards the Inland Post, it is considered of much importance to maintain a distinction in the outward appearance of letters and book-post matter, in order that the latter may be readily picked out for examination when necessary; but, apart from this, my Predecessors have been advised that an envelope having any inclosure in it is, to all intents and purposes, a letter.

THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS asked the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that the estimate for overtime in the Savings Bank Department for 1888 was very much exceeded; whether, although upwards of 300 clerks have been and are now working for 12 hours each day, the work is at the present time much in arrears as compared with last year; and what steps he proposes to take in order to remedy this continual arrears of work in that Department?

*MR. RAIKES: The Estimate for extra duty for the year 1888-9, viz., £8,500, will be considerably exceeded when the year closes on the 31st instant. The annual account to the 31st December, 1888, has to be rendered to Parliament before the 30th April next. This account is not in arrear, and will be presented within the proper date. The question of meeting the rapid growth of business of the Savings Bank is engaging the attention of the Government.

THE *NILE* AND *TRAFALGAR*.

MR. GOURLEY (Sunderland) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty if he would be good enough to inform the House if any, and what, alterations have been made in the construction of the hulls and disposition of the guns of the *Trafalgar* and *Nile* from the original designs; whether the bows have been or are intended to be strengthened for ramming warfare, or whether the fore and after ends of both vessels are, as in the case of ships of the *Admiral* class, wholly without protection; and whether it is a fact that the full-speed coal-endurance of those vessels barely exceeds three days' steaming; if so, whether he considers this class of battle ship (and of which Parliament is to be asked to construct more) capable on an emergency of leaving with safety their coaling base, whether at home or abroad?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The only alteration of any importance in the *Nile* and *Trafalgar* from the original design consists in the increase of side plating over the central battery to four inches. The alterations in armament are the substitution of six 4·7 in. quick-firing guns for eight 5in. guns in the central battery. The bow and stern of these ships are unprotected by vertical armour for a length of about 60ft. No change has been made or is intended in the construction of the bows of these ships, which is such as to render them thoroughly efficient for ramming purposes. For continuous ocean steaming for long periods the estimated full speed is about 15 knots, and at this speed the ships can steam with full bunkers for eight days, or at 10 knots for 27 days.

MR. SEGRAVE, R.M.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he would have any objection to lay upon the Table of the House the *Government Gazette* of the Cape of Good Hope, published Friday, 4th September, 1885, in which the following entry relative to Mr. O'Neil Segrave, R.M., appears:—

> "Head Quarters, Colonial Forces,
> "King William's Town,
> 24th August, 1885,
> "Colonial Forces Order, No. 281.
>
> "His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, has been

pleased to approve of the following alterations, &c. in the Colonial Forces:—

"No. 2 Cape Infantry Regiment.

"Lieutenant O'Neil Segrave's services are dispensed with from 31st July, 1885.

"Herbert Watson Major, gentleman, to be Lieutenant, from 1st August, 1885, vice Segrave, whose services have been dispensed with.

"By Order,
"P. Kenion Ffolliott, Lt.-Colonel,
"Military Secretary, Colonial Services."

BARON H. DE WORMS: In answer to a question put to me by the hon. Member for Mid-Cork on the 19th instant, I read to the House the official notification in the Cape *Gazette* of the 20th July, 1885, that Lieutenant O'Neil Segrave's services had been dispensed with. That notification was repeated in the *Gazette* of the 31st August, as set forth in the hon. Member's question, and I therefore do not see any advantage in laying the *Gazette* on the Table of the House.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department the date of Inspector Littlechild's visit to Dr. Gallagher and John Daly in Chatham Prison; and if the minutes of the interview between these prisoners and Mr. Soames or Pigott can be furnished to the solicitors for the defendants before the Special Commission?

MR. MATTHEWS: Chief Inspector Littlechild visited Daly in Chatham Prison on the 20th of February. He did not visit Gallagher. If the solicitor for any of the parties before the Special Commission will subpœna the Deputy Governor to produce his minutes of any interview at which he was present, no obstacle will be placed by the Government in the way of their production.

SIR W. HARCOURT asked whether no evidence had been communicated except on supœna by official persons to the prosecutors in this case; and whether the other parties could not be allowed to see the documents relating to the interviews?

MR. MATTHEWS said, that there would be no objection as far as he was concerned to a solicitor seeing the documents for the *boná fide* purposes of a trial, but the right hon. Gentleman would be aware that he must not set the precedent of divulging, merely for the purpose of inquiry, the details of interviews which took place between a prisoner and another person in the enforced presence of a warder.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked if Inspector Andrews, an officer from Scotland Yard, visited America since the passing of the Special Commission Act; and if his business there was connected with the charges and allegations made before the Royal Commission?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative; to the second in the negative.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentlemen state whether Inspector Andrews saw Le Caron?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am not aware at all whether he did or not.

WELSH SUNDAY CLOSING.

MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention had been called to the following remarks made by Mr. Justice Grantham, in his recent charge to the Grand Jury of Glamorganshire:—

> "His experience confirmed all that had been referred to lately as the experience of the police in the various counties of Wales. Wales had been made an experimental station for the purpose of testing the question of Sunday Closing, and he was glad that this was so, as it had enabled the question to be threshed out in a practical way. It fortified the opinion expressed by many that the Sunday Closing Act would not be a success."

And if Her Majesty's Government will agree to the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, and will oppose any legislation to establish Sunday Closing in other parts of the United Kingdom till such Committee has made its report?

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth) also asked whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been drawn to the following remarks of Mr. Justice Grantham, as reported in the *Western Mail* of 15th March, on the subject of Sunday Closing in Wales:—

> "There is no doubt about it at all that there is less drunkenness where there is more drink than there is where there is more teetotalism. Wales has undoubtedly been made a sort of experimental station for the purpose of testing this question. But we must do something else, try something else, find out something

else, before we can prevent the amount of drunkenness which undoubtedly is very serious in this country."

And whether the Government are prepared to give effect to these remarks?

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I wish to ask whether it is a fact that the Act prohibiting the sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sundays throughout every part of Scotland, passed in this House in 1853, has been in force since 1854 with satisfaction to the community at large; and, whether a similar law has been in existence affecting Ireland since 1878, and that a Select Committee of this House which sat last Session to inquire into the working of the Act reported that—

> "None of the evils which were predicted by some persons as likely to ensue from the passing of the Act have been proved to have arisen to any appreciable extent,"

and recommended the continuance and extension of the Act?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Government are of opinion that, in view of recent experience as to the operation of the Sunday Closing Act in Wales, inquiry into the working of that measure will be desirable; and they have it under consideration in what way the inquiry had best be conducted, whether by Special Committee or by Royal Commission.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, when such Committee or Commission is appointed, he will take care that the Committee is not packed in the same manner —[*Cries of* "Order!"]

*Mr. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that the same law applies to supplemental questions as to that of questions put on the Paper, and the form of the hon. Member's question would not be admitted upon the Paper.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that this Commission or Committee will not have an undue proportion of Members who have been previously pledged to carry out legislation against the sale of intoxicating liquors?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think it is hardly necessary to state that the Government will take care that every interest is represented.

FISHING BOARDS.

Mr. ROBERTS (Flint, &c.) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether persons appointed by the County Council to act on Fish Conserving Boards will enter on their duties forthwith, or on the expiration of the period for which their predecessors have been chosen?

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: The persons appointed by the County Councils to act on Boards of Conservators of Fishery Districts will enter upon their duties at the expiration of the year for which their predecessors have been appointed respectively.

TITHE RIOTS IN WALES.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has obtained any report of the serious conflicts between the police and the people at Penygarn, Cardiganshire, yesterday, in connection with the collection of tithes?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have written to the Chief Constable asking for a report, but none has reached me as yet.

ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked the Secretary of State for War when the Committee of Inquiry on the Army Medical Department would begin its labours; and whether he could state its composition to the House?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: The Committee has held a preliminary meeting to-day. The Earl of Camperdown is Chairman of the Committee. The Navy is represented by Admiral Hotham, C.B., medical interests by Dr. Graham Balfour and Mr. N. C. Macnamara, and and the hon. Members for Wigtownshire, Portsmouth, and Leicester have also joined the Committee, the hon. Member for Portsmouth being the Army representative; and I propose to add one more civilian Member.

Dr. FARQUHARSON: Why not strengthen the Committee by putting on it a medical officer of personal experience in connection with the services?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: It has been thought that the medical officers in the Services had better give evidence, and that they should not be put in the position of judges.

CROFTER EMIGRATION.

Mr. WATT asked the Lord Advocate whether the Government had received any further Report with reference to the crofter families emigrated last year; and whether he can state the total number of persons emigrated to date?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: There is no further report since I answered the question of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Helen's, and there were no special circumstances requiring any. The number of persons emigrated is 193.

FATHER M'FADDEN.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is it a fact that Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners, to the number of 38, charged with an alleged complicity in the murder of District Inspector Martin, were last Saturday further remanded by the magistrates till Saturday, 23rd March; how many times have Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners been remanded by the Magistrates from 3rd February, the date of their arrest, till the present time; is he aware that, on each magisterial investigation and remand, the prisoners are conveyed by special train to and fro between Derry Gaol and Letterkenny, a distance of over 20 miles; is the special train ordered by the Government, as stated by County Inspector Hayes to the hon. Member for South Donegal; if so, under what heading in the Estimates will this expense be included; is he aware that, on Monday, 4th March, Mr. Hamilton, R.M., in the presence of three of the Members of Parliament for the county Donegal, at Letterkenny, censured the conduct of the Government in asking for these repeated remands, and only consented to give a remand till the following Thursday; could he explain the reasons which have induced the same Resident Magistrate to grant several remands since that time; and will Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners, if not discharged but returned for trial next Saturday, be precluded by these delays from standing their trial at the present Assizes?

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers the question, I wish to ask him if it is true that Father M'Fadden has been remanded seven times and taken backwards and forwards from Derry to Letterkenny and from Letterkenny to Gweedore?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I cannot answer the question of the hon. Member for Hanley without notice. The answer to the question on the paper is that the prisoners arrested in connection with the murder of District Inspector Martin, though not to the number of 38, were remanded on Saturday until March 23rd. There appear to have been, in all, three or four remands. The prisoners were conveyed by special train. The cost will come under the Constabulary Vote. Mr. Hamilton, R.M., did not censure the Government, but expressed an opinion that another remand should not be asked for without evidence being given. The Resident Magistrate since granted a remand no doubt because he thought there were grounds for so doing. The prisoners, if not returned for trial before Saturday next, could not, I understand, be tried at the present Assizes.

MR. HORNE, R.M.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. Horne, R.M., has recently been promoted from being a third class Resident Magistrate to a first class Resident Magistrate; whether he was so promoted over the heads of his seniors, and over how many seniors; when and on what grounds was the promotion made; and how long was Mr. Horne engaged in collecting the evidence which has been used by the *Times* before the Special Commission?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Horne was promoted to the first class of Resident Magistrates in succession to the late Mr. Warburton, who died on the 2nd of December, from which date the promotion took effect. He was thus given 37 steps in seniority. The promotion was made in recognition of the signal public services of Mr. Horne in connection with the detection of criminals, both before and since the passing of the Crimes Act. I may mention especially, among recent instances, the conviction of the murderers of Patrick Quirke, of the assailants of John Lane, who was fired at and wounded in November, 1887, and of the persons who were convicted for shooting the schoolmaster Robinson and his daughter in March of last year. In all these cases the criminals were brought to justice mainly through the action of Mr. Horne.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Does promotion by 37 steps mean that this gentleman has been promoted over the heads of 37 other persons?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, I apprehend it does mean that.

THE MEMBER FOR HOLMFIRTH.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the hon. Member for the Holmfirth Division (Mr. Wilson), whilst taking a walk with Mrs. Wilson in the neighbourhood of the Gweedore Hotel, on Saturday, 16th instant, was persistently followed about by two armed constables; whether, when the hon. Member shortly after took a car for a drive with Mrs. Wilson, three armed constables mounted another car and persistently followed them for some time; and what was the object of this police supervision?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the facts are substantially as stated in the question. Information had been received by the police on Saturday, the 16th, that a meeting of the National League would be held in the Gweedore district, where it had been proclaimed under the Crimes Act of 1887, at which English Members of Parliament would be present. A patrol was directed to ascertain the whereabouts of the intended meeting. The hon. Member on his arrival in Gweedore was not known to the police, but as soon as it was ascertained who he was, and that he had apparently no intention of addressing any such meeting, no police supervision was exercised.

Mr. J. ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman send immediate instructions to the police to allow Mr. and Mrs. Wilson reasonable freedom of movement?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he was not aware that the house of Mr. Wilson's car-driver was entered in the night time by Sergeant O'Mahony and the man cross-examined as to Mr. Wilson's movements.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS asked whether instructions would be immediately sent ordering that Mr. Wilson should have reasonable freedom in his motions?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, said he gathered that the hon. Member had reasonable freedom of motion as soon as it was seen who he was. He had given the fullest information in his power.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS said his information had been received direct from Mr. Wilson by telegraph.

THE RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC ACT, 1888:

Mr. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N., Lonsdale) asked the President of the Board of Trade if the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888 gave any opening to Railway and Canal Companies to increase the minimum distance fixed by their respective Acts, and if the present attempt made by them to do this, as in their revised scale of rates, is not *ultra vires;* and if existing agreements between them and traders will remain in force after the new scale has received the sanction of Parliament, or if they will become null and void and necessitate fresh agreements?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The view of the Board of Trade is that, in settling the maximum rates which railway companies are to charge, if the intention of the Act is to be carried out, they must determine the maximums chargeable for short distances; and that, consequently, proposals with this object do come within the intention of the Act. But though the railway companies propose, the disposal rests with others. I am unable to answer the latter portion of the question; agreements must be determined by the Courts of Law.

Mr. AINSLIE said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the main point of the question—namely, whether the Act afforded an opening for the increase of charges?

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: I have endeavoured to explain the position in which the matter stands. I think it is competent for the railway companies to make such a proposal, but the disposal will rest with other persons.

QUESTIONS.

Mr. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury, having regard to the great pressure on the time of Parliament, as evidenced by the fact that its Sittings last year only concluded upon Christmas Eve, he is prepared to take immediate steps to deal with the subject of questions put on the Notice

Paper of the House, with a view to the limiting of the time thus consumed, by recommending that questions of local and minor interest be dealt with by written reply from the heads of Departments to which they may relate; that only those which are of a grave or Imperial character shall be accorded a public response during the Sittings of the House; and that in no case shall consequential questions without notice be considered entitled to a public answer?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not surprised, looking at the hour we have reach (4.50), that the question is raised by my hon. Friend. It is one that has often been under consideration, but I am not, as at present advised, prepared to take the steps he suggests, as there would be great difficulty in deciding what were questions of local or minor, and what of a grave or Imperial character. Some authority would have to be charged with the responsibility of settling this point, and his decisions would, I am afraid, often fail to meet with the approval of hon. Members. I personally am averse to making any changes in the Rules of the House, unless painful experiences have shown them to be absolutely necessary for expediting the transaction of public business. But I am not by any means sure it will not be necessary to make further Amendments of our Rules and Orders.

THE COLWICH CHARITIES.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield) asked the hon. Member for the Penrith Division of Cumberland (Mr. J. W. Lowther), whether, in the month of June, 1887, an official inquiry was held by Mr. Inspector Goode into the proposed re-organization of the Colwich Charities; whether at such inquiry it was agreed by all parties that the number of persons to form the Committee for the future distribution of the charities should be seven, namely, the Vicars of Colwich and Great Haywood and the Earl of Lichfield, and four others to be elected by the ratepayers; whether it is the fact that, when the scheme came down from the Charity Commissioners, it was found that it provided for two ex-officio and three co-optative members, whilst the parishioners were only to be allowed to elect four members, thus giving the majority to non-elected members; whether the parishioners of Colwich rejected this altered arrangement; whether, notwithstanding repeated applications, the scheme as originally agreed to has been delayed 18 months; what is the reason of this delay; and whether Her Majesty's Government will take steps to have the matter proceeded with at once, and completed in accordance to the expressed wishes of the ratepayers of the parish of Colwich?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The answer to the first question is in the affirmative. As to the second question, a proposal was made in the sense indicated, as to the composition of the body of Trustees, and no objection was taken by those then present. The answer to the third question is in the affirmative. The number of co-optative Trustees has been fixed at three, with a view to the more efficient administration of the charity over the several outlying areas into which the ancient parish of Colwich has been divided. As to the fourth question, an objection to this portion of the Commissioners' scheme has been received from a section of the parishioners, and has been duly considered. As to the fifth and sixth questions, the delay which has arisen is due to local causes and to the difficulty of defining the areas to be benefited. As to the seventh question, the scheme will shortly be established, in which several of the recommendations made to the Commissioners will be embodied. I desire to point out to the honourable Baronet in reference to his second, fourth, and seventh questions, that the Commissioners are responsible for the scheme, and that no agreement of any two or more sections of the parishioners can preclude the Commissioners from exercising their discretion as to the details of the scheme for the benefit of all parties interested.

NAVAL AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government will invite the Royal Commission now sitting to inquire into Naval and Military Administration, presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, to present an interim

Report to Her Majesty containing a digest of the evidence given before the said Commission, both oral and written, up to the close of February last, with a view to the same being laid before Parliament, in order the better to enable hon. Members to judge of the sufficiency or otherwise of the proposals of Her Majesty's Government for an increase to Her Majesty's Navy, in accordance with precedents, as in the case of the Report of the evidence taken by Royal Commission on the Education Acts presented in March 1888?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The inquiry of the Royal Commission on Naval and Military Administration is approaching completion, and it is undesirable to interrupt their proceedings for the purpose of framing an *ad interim* Report. A large portion of the evidence received is of a highly confidential nature, and could not in any way be made public. It is to be remembered also that the terms of the reference to the Commission relate to the administration of the Naval and Military Departments, so that the result of their inquiry will have no bearing upon the naval proposals of Her Majesty's Government.

SUGAR BOUNTIES.

MR. PICTON (Leicester) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether it has usually been the practice to charge the Board of Trade with business relating to Sugar Bounties; and whether the Government has called for, or received, any Report or opinion from that Board on the subject of the pending Convention; and, if so, is there any objection to lay that Report or opinion upon the Table of the House?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The negotiations with foreign countries on the subject of this Convention were conducted according to usual practice by the Foreign Office. Any communications from the Board of Trade on the subject are included in the papers which have already been presented.

FOREIGN JOURNALISTS.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it was the fact that a police officer, giving his name as Inspector W. Melville, of the Criminal Investigation Department, called, on Saturday the 2th instant, at 9, Sutherland Place, Bayswater, the residence of two Armenian gentlemen named Broussali and Sevasly, being the manager and editor respectively of the journal *Haiasdan*, published in London in the French and Armenian languages, and addressed to the people of the house a number of inquisitorial questions regarding MM. Broussali and Sevasly's habits, movements, and associates, the names and description of persons calling on them, &c., they being at the moment absent, and obtained from their apartments a copy of the *Haiasdan*; whether this policeman, on being asked what his justification for these inquiries was, answered that he came on behalf of the Turkish Government, and added that the last number of the *Haiasdan* (which contained reports of the sufferings of the Armenian Christians) had caused great dissatisfaction in Turkish official circles; whether the Turkish Government made any, and what, application to the Home Office on the subject of the journal entitled *Haiasdan*; and, whether, if the facts are as above suggested, this domiciliary visit took place by the order of the Home Secretary, or of any, and what, official of the Home Department?

MR. MATTHEWS: It is a fact that Inspector Melville called at the place named on the day in question. I am informed that it is not true that inquisitorial questions were asked. The inspector's object was simply to ascertain whether the gentlemen resided there and published the newspaper in question. Both gentlemen were in their rooms at the time. The copy of the paper was given to the inspector by the landlady. The inspector informed the landlady that he knew nothing whatever to the prejudice of either gentleman, and he made no reference whatever to the Turkish Government, or to Turkish official circles. The Turkish Ambassador made inquiries as to the publisher and printer of the paper in question. Thereupon the Foreign Office requested the Home Office to ascertain, for their own information, whether the paper was still published in Paris, or, as stated in one of its issues, in London. The Home Office then instructed the police to make the necessary inquiries, and Inspector Melville, with this object, called upon the landlady in the manner stated.

MR. BRYCE asked whether it was the practice to place the Metropolitan Police at the disposal of a foreign Government?

MR. MATTHEWS said, the police were in no sense placed at the disposal of foreign Governments. An inquiry was made by the Foreign Office of the Home Office, for their own information.

MR. BRYCE: The Turkish Government applied to the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office applied to the Home Office, which ascertained certain facts.

MR. MATTHEWS said, the information obtained was for the satisfaction of the Foreign Office. Of what took place between the Foreign Office and the Turkish Ambassador he knew nothing.

MR. BRYCE gave notice that he would call attention to the matter.

CAPTAIN SEGRAVE, R.M.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will now ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, with the knowledge of the facts with which he is now acquainted through the Colonial Office as to the conduct of Captain Segrave, he intends to-night, on the Vote on Account, to ask for the salary of that gentleman, who, I believe, was the presiding magistrate at Mitchelstown?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As soon as I received the information I, of course, telegraphed over to Dublin, and Mr. Segrave has been suspended.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: Does the right hon. Gentleman consider the fact of a person being a discredited Colonial servant necessarily unfits him for the post of Resident Magistrate in Ireland?

MR. SEXTON: What further evidence is the right hon. Gentleman waiting for, beyond the declaration of the Colonial Office, before he dismisses this gentleman?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I prefer not dismissing an officer until I have full documentary evidence. As soon as Government receive proof that Mr. Segrave is an improper person to discharge the duties of a Resident Magistrate he will be dismissed. I am not going so far as to indicate to the public that, because a Resident Magistrate in Ireland happens to be unpopular with hon. Gentlemen opposite, therefore he is not to receive the same meed of justice which would be extended to any other officer.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if, on a recent occasion, in answer to the advocate of an accused party before him, Captain Segrave being President of a Crimes Act Court, said he was, "in the opinion of the Lord Lieutenant, a gentleman with sufficient legal attainments to carry on the business of the Court?"

No answer was given.

MR. SEXTON: Sir, we have been attacked, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware of the answer given to the House by the Colonial Under Secretary, that Mr. Segrave was dismissed from the service of the Cape Government for gross misconduct; and whether he is still to be continued in the Public Service?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Segrave is only kept in the Public Service in this sense, that he is not allowed to perform any magisterial duties, and he does not receive any pay. As soon as full information is received on this point, of course he will be dealt with in the ordinary way.

IRELAND—CROWN PROSECUTIONS IN 1879.

MR. T. M. HEALY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the Crown briefs in agrarian and conspiracy trials since 1879 are still in existence; whether the panels upon which many Catholic jurors are ordered to "stand by" by the Crown since 1879 had been destroyed; whether the various petitions of the Invincible, Patrick Delaney, were still extant; and whether, if any of the foregoing were in the possession of the Government, the advisers of the parties before the Special Commission would be allowed access to them for the purpose of their defence?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I have already said more than once, I cannot answer questions of this kind across the floor of the House. The proper course is for the solicitors for any of the parties to make application in the usual manner to the Irish Government for such documents as they may desire.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I want to know, Sir, whether the Crown panels are still in existence, as Catholics, as a matter of fact, have been excluded from the juries?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry the hon. and learned Member should have taken the opportunity of putting a Question to make an unfounded charge, but I think he will see that the matter is one in which I cannot give him the information asked for. The hon. Member had better make his own application.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: In my own defence I will apply.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether there are now any Royal Irish Constabulary or Dublin policemen or officers in London on subpœna from the *Times;* and whether any will be allowed to return to London until they shall be wanted for examination?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that there are no members of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and no officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary in attendance in London. There are, I am informed, three members of the Constabulary in London who have been subpœnaed by the *Times.* A letter has been addressed by the police authorities to the solicitor for the *Times* requesting him to state the necessity for the purposes of the Special Commission of the continued attendance of these witnesses, and the matter will be considered on receipt of his reply. The Government are anxious, in the interests of the Irish administration, that as few members of the Constabulary should be withdrawn from duty as possible; but they certainly would not take upon themselves the responsibility of declining to allow members of the force to attend in London if they thought their services were required for the purposes of the Commission.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Why, if the Irish authorities can dispense with these men, are the Irish Police Forces not considerably reduced?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already explained that it is a source of inconvenience to the Irish Government; and, as to the reason these men are detained here, I am not aware what it is. As I have told the hon. and learned Member, the solicitor of the *Times* has been asked whether there is a real necessity for their remaining in London.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: The Commission adjourned for a fortnight, but three members of the Irish Constabulary remain in London. Will the right hon. Gentleman be kind enough to tell us whether he has got their rank, and where they are stationed?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether a communication has been sent to Mr. Soames by the police authorities asking that these officers should be sent back?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot answer that question.

Mr. P. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether District Inspector Seddall has been recently in London in the interests of the *Times*, and can he state the date of his arrival and departure; whether he was in daily attendance at the Commission Court; whether he was examined before the Commission; and, if not, can he inform the House what this officer was doing during his stay in London?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that District Inspector Seddall has not been recently in London. He attended early in the proceedings on subpœna to give evidence if required. He was not in daily attendance at the court, as he was informed that he would receive notice of examination. He was subsequently recalled for duty in Ireland, without having been called upon for examination. His sole business in London was attendance in obedience to the subpœna as a possible witness.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: (Wolverhampton): May I ask what course the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer intends to take with regard to the Bill for the redemption of the Consolidated and Reduced Three per Cent Stock?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I shall be very glad if I were permitted to move the Resolution of which I have given notice, so that I may introduce my Bill for the redemption of the Consolidated Three per Cent and Reduced Three per Cent Stock, as the Bill can then be printed and distributed by Saturday. But if there is any opposition on the part of any considerable number of Members I shall not desire to press it.

MR. O'BRIEN.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary if he would now say if Section 11 of the Irish Prisons Act of 1887 would be applied for the purpose of holding a public inquiry into the treatment of Mr. William O'Brien in prison; and, if so, how soon that inquiry would be held?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: An inquiry is being held, but I think it is impossible and improbable that it can be of a public character. I do not know that that was ever contemplated. After that inquiry is concluded I shall lay the result on the Table of the House, and when that has been done it will be for the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and others who think with him, to say whether they desire any further inquiry. I will then consider whether a further inquiry should be granted, though I do not think it would be a good precedent to do so.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): When will these statements be presented?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am anxious that they should be presented as soon as possible. The investigation is not absolutely concluded yet, and until that is done the papers cannot be presented.

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Section 11 of the Act of 1877 does not exclude publicity, and is he willing that the parties concerned should appear by counsel, so that they may have the ordinary means of testing the witnesses by cross-examination?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The inquiry is being held in accordance with ordinary and unbroken precedent. I do not think the hon. Gentleman is justified in coming to the conclusion that the evidence taken in the inquiry will be unworthy of credence.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that the inquiry suggested to him a week ago has already been held?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; the inquiry the right hon. Gentleman asked for has not been held, nor is it going to be held. He asked for an inquiry which would have formed a most inconvenient and injurious precedent, and under the circumstances I did not carry out his suggestion; but I did order an inquiry under the ordinary practice of the Prisons Board. The result of that inquiry will be laid before the House, and it will be for the House to determine what view they take of the evidence.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford N.): By whom is the inquiry being conducted?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: By a prison inspector. I think it is Mr. Joyce.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Has Mr. O'Brien been examined before this inquiry?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course the inquiry cannot be regarded as concluded until Mr. O'Brien has been examined.

MR. SEXTON: Can he appear by counsel; has he been informed of the names of the witnesses against him; and will he be allowed to cross-examine them?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe not. I have ordered this inquiry under the ordinary method, and I believe it is not part of the ordinary method of such inquiries that there should be cross-examination of the witnesses. Mr. O'Brien will be examined, and the result of the inquiry laid before the House.

MR. CONDON (Tipperary E.): Will the Visiting Justices of Clonmel be examined before the inquiry?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If their evidence is directly material, I presume they will.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will Mr. O'Brien be made acquainted with the evidence of the other witnesses given against him?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether the evidence of the other witnesses will be given for or against Mr. O'Brien. The inquiry will be held under the ordinary practice, and the usual course will be followed.

MR. CONDON: Who is to determine whether the evidence of the Visiting Justices is relevant or otherwise?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I suppose, Sir, the inspector who conducts the inquiry.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Mark Hanbury Beaufoy, esquire, for Lambeth (Kennington Division).

MOTION.

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend and extend the Law relating to Judicial Factors and others in Scotland, and to unite the offices of the Accountant of the Court of Session and the Accountant in Bankruptcy in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor Gensral for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 166.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

Supply—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Question again proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £3,729,203, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890."

[See *Page* 256.]

Debate resumed.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I rise for the purpose of making some observations relative to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, whose salary comes under Clause 2. We have been asked by the First Lord of the Treasury how it is we did not accept his offer for a day in order to discuss a Vote of Censure. The answer is perfectly simple—it is because every day we discover some new fact; and that it would be most irrational for us to move a Vote of Censure, although I dare say it will come in good time, until we have got complete material for our case. This very day I have put a question on the Paper for the Chief Secretary, to ask him whether it is true that the notes of the private inquiry held by the County Court Judge Curran into the circumstances of the Phœnix Park murders were communicated to the *Times*, and, if so, by whom? In the remarks I made in moving my Amendment about a month ago, I ventured to ask the Government if it was true, and, if so, upon what principle, that officers of the Irish Government, in receipt of public pay, had been employed as collectors of evidence for the *Times;* whether Resident Magistrates assisted, or were present, at that collection of evidence; and, whether any Crown Solicitor was employed as a paid agent in the inquiry relating to crime in his own county? I propose to-night to press the question, which I then informed the Government it would be our duty to bring before the House. The Chief Secretary himself has told us from time to time he has not followed the proceedings of the Special Commission with any close interest. I confess this is an announcement that we may be surprised at; and I should have thought that a Minister who, probably more than any other, fired the train, might have curiosity enough to look at the after explosion. But, as the Prime Minister himself, apparently, does not read the proceedings of the Special Commission, I do not know why the Chief Secretary should. And the Prime Minister himself does not think he is wanting in magnanimity, to put it in no other way, in going before the public and declaring he does not know, in spite of the withdrawal of the letters by the original promulgators of them, and in spite of the words used by the President of the Special Commission on the last day of the Court, whether those letters are, or are not, forgeries. These are the particular things on which I shall come to close quarters with the Chief Secretary. On the 7th or 8th of this month—I believe it was the 7th—the Chief Secretary said—

> "I understand the Royal Irish Constabulary have not been employed in collecting evidence, except in relation to the evidence they were prepared to give before the Special Commission, nor have they paid money to or taken proofs of witnesses."

Now, the Committee will not, I hope, think it tedious if I test that deliberate statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary by a few facts disclosed before the Special Commission. From the evidence given by Head Constable Irwin, Michael Roche, a witness named Iago, James Buckley, Andrew Coleman, and other witnesses, it is clear that police constables, were employed in collecting evidence; so that when the Chief Secretary for Ireland states that the Royal Irish Constabulary had not been employed in collecting evidence, except in relation to what they themselves proposed to give, he was singularly ignorant of what had been going on. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that—

> "When a witness was called, be he connected with the Irish Government or not, it was his business to review in his own mind all such information that he had got and to confirm it in every possible way."

The boy named Walsh who was examined before the Commission on the 15th of December last, stated that he was sent for by District Inspector Alan, of Swinford, and that in the course of conversation the district inspector said he did not know what would happen to him about a certain insurance fraud in which the lad had, or was alleged to have, been implicated. Do the Committee realize what conduct that was on the part of the inspector, and does the Chief Secretary for Ireland conceive that it was the right or the duty of the inspector to confirm evidence which he was collecting in this way by threatening the lad? The Home Secretary on the previous day, in a very imposing manner, said that it was the duty of great officers of State to constitute themselves the servants of justice and truth. I wonder whether the Chief Secretary, in sanctioning or overlooking and condoning conduct of that kind, considers that he is making himself and the Government to which he belongs the servants of justice and truth. I am informed that the district inspector was never called to contradict the statement of the boy Walsh. And now about the money. The Chief Secretary has stated that the Government have not paid money in connection with these matters. I cannot prove that they have; but I would ask the attention of the Committee to the evidence of the informer Thomas O'Connor. This witness stated that he received a letter from Houston, from the chief office of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union in Grafton Street, asking him to call upon Sergeant Donaldson, who would give him a railway ticket, and tell him where to go. He wanted to know what were the relations between Sergeant Donaldson and Dublin Castle and Houston. Can it be denied that, although Donaldson did not give the witness money, he did give him what was an equivalent? If it cannot, the observation of the Chief Secretary is unfounded and cannot be defended. I now come to two cases which are, to my mind, the most serious of all. The first is the case of Delaney; and, dark and sombre as has been the history of English government in Ireland, I do not believe that there has ever been a more sombre incident than this. Delaney, as everyone is aware, was a man who was sentenced to death for being concerned in the Phœnix Park murders. The death sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. He was asked about evidence to be given before the Commission in the first week of January, and he was then seen in Maryborough Prison by Mr. Shannon, Mr. Soames's agent. Mr. Shannon produced a letter of introduction from someone, telling Delaney that he could usefully give him—Mr. Shannon—information. The note said, and said falsely, that Mr. Shannon was a Crown official. Delaney said that if he had not understood that Mr. Shannon was a Crown official he would have refused to say a word to him. Mr. Shannon, in that interview with Delaney in Maryborough Prison, referred to a statement which had been made to Dr. Barr, of whom we have heard to-night; but Mr. Shannon took a fresh statement. The statement made by Delaney was made in the presence of the governor of the prison, but Delaney testifies his belief that the conversation was not heard by him. Shannon in the prison took Delaney's statement down, and then was guilty of the gross enormity of administering an oath to him which was wholly unlawful, and then making Delaney swear to the statement he had made. He had no more right to administer an oath than I have to administer an oath to the right hon. Gentleman. This was a monstrous proceeding, and was absolutely unlawful. I do not think anything of the kind was ever done before. Will the Chief Secretary defend that transaction? It is said by the Government that all they did was for the elucidation of the truth. This proceeding looks far more like subornation of perjury than the elucidation of the truth. What was the position of Delaney at the time? He was in prison under a sentence of perpetual imprisonment. He had nothing to look forward to but a dark and horrible future. In order to support the cause of justice and elicit the truth, you go to a man of that kind, and take evidence on oath from him which you are to use in trying to blacken the

Newcastle have made comments and criticisms upon the evidence given before the Commission, and this is to be deplored. Whatever their motive may have been, no impartial outsider can put upon their speeches any other interpretation than this—that they desire to discredit in the House of Commons the evidence they are unable to shake in the place where it was given. [*Ironical laughter.*] At all events, they did not attempt to shake it. [Mr. LABOUCHERE: Name!] The evidence I have more particularly in my mind is that of Le Caron. I have no objection whatever to this method of procedure by question and answer; but if it were possible for questions to be addressed to others than those who now sit on the Ministerial Bench, the results obtained might, perhaps, be still more interesting and fruitful. I have never been able to understand why it was that, after Pigott had stated on the Friday to the Member for Northampton that he was a forger and a liar, no steps were taken to watch him or to arrest him. I confess my curiosity has been greatly aroused by the letter which appeared in the *Times* this morning from Mr. Anderson as to those unknown documents to which such passionate allusion was made yesterday by the right hon. Member for Derby. There is another question about which I should like to have information—information which would be as valuable to the Commission and the country—how it has come about that witnesses have been intimidated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I must endeavour to keep the discussion within certain limits, and the question now before the Committee is the conduct of the Irish Government.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I at once recognize the propriety of your ruling, Sir; but there is a great temptation to wander far afield in dealing with charges so recklessly hurled at the Government. Now, in criticizing the attitude of the Government towards the Commission, the right hon. Member for Newcastle has laid down principles of his own. What are the principles laid down by the right hon. Gentleman? He says that we ought, as I understand him, to have adopted an impartial attitude—a matter in which we are of course all at one—but then the right hon. Gentleman implies that by "adopting an impartial attitude" he means that we ought to have abstained as a Government from giving any information or allowing any person connected with the Government to come forward and state what he knew.

MR. J. MORLEY: That is not what I said. I said that they were bound to place their agents at the disposal of the Commissioners, when asked by the Commissioners.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the right hon. Gentleman will cast his mind back to the particular provisions of the Bill constituting the Commission and the precedents for it, he will see that the position taken up by the Government is a right one. That Bill was based upon the precedent of that appointing the Commission to inquire into the rattening case at Sheffield. [Mr. T. HEALY: No.] It was closely—I believe exactly—framed upon that measure. [Mr. T. HEALY: Nothing of the kind.] I confess my own anticipation was that the Commission would employ the method adopted by the Sheffield Commission, and would themselves call such evidence as they desired, and ask for such information as they thought material. For what were no doubt excellent reasons, upon which I am not entitled to comment, the Commission thought that the aims of the investigation could be better and more fully attained by treating the matter as a trial between two parties, one of whom made and the other of whom rebutted allegations. The Commissioners having adopted that attitude, what was the proper line for the Government to take? I thought over the matter to the best of my ability, and the line we determined to take, at all events for the present, was not to volunteer information to the Commission or the parties, but to supply, as far as we could, what the parties appearing before the Commission might apply for, providing always that the information was of that kind which we could supply with a due consideration of the public interests. I perfectly admit that in doing that we may not have gone far enough, but the right hon. Gentleman thinks we have gone too far. We decided to adopt an impartial attitude—[*Ironical laughter*]—well, I will leave out the word impartial if you object to it, and say the negative attitude of waiting to supply information, as far as we were concerned, until it was required. Now, is it possible to conceive of any other course that could have or ought to have been adopted by the Government? Does the right hon. Gentleman think that we ought to have absolutely told everybody concerned—the representatives of the *Times* and those of hon. Members below the Gangway—"We have nothing whatever to do with supplying information to anybody;" that we should have put an absolute veto upon any police officer giving any evidence? With information at our disposal which might assist in enabling the Commission to come to a decision, ought we to have kept ourselves entirely in the background and allow the parties to fight it out themselves? I think that is a wholly untenable position, though I understand that it is the position taken up by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. The questions which we have had brought before us by the right hon. Gentleman are whether the Government have favoured one side more than another; are they guilty of partiality; and, above all, are they or any person in the service of the Government guilty of those darker crimes which the right hon. Gentleman does not hesitate to impute—namely, of attempting to tamper with witnesses, to bribe and suborn them?

MR. J. MORLEY: I did not say that the Government themselves had directly suborned witnesses, but that by their connivance at the interview of Shannon with Delaney they were not providing for the elucidation of the truth.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it would have been better if the right hon. Gentleman had deferred these accusations with regard to the accuracy of the evidence given before the Commission until the Commissioners themselves had given their decision. Let the Committee recollect, with regard to these charges of illegitimate and partial use of information at the disposal of the Government, that ample opportunity has occurred or will occur before the Commission to investigate the matter. Mr. Soames has been in the box, and he could have been cross-examined as to the sources from which he obtained his information. It was open to any of the four or five learned Gentlemen in the House who appear for the defence to have done their best to elicit the information; but they refrained from making any kind of cross-examination with regard to any malpractices. The interpretation I put upon their conduct is a natural interpretation; it is that Mr. Soames is an honourable gentleman, and has done nothing in the past of which he need in the slightest degree be ashamed. Now, the right hon. Gentleman has called my attention to four or five specific cases. On some of these I have not been able to obtain information—I know nothing about Burke, of Clonbur, or Sergeant O'Brien, who brought a witness over. Nor do I know anything about the ticket which is alleged to have been given by Sergeant Donaldson, though I may say that, as far as I understand it, giving a ticket appears to be a perfectly innocent transaction. But the point upon which the right hon. Gentleman has chiefly dwelt is the case—which I have heard described as most monstrous—that not only was Mr. Shannon admitted to the prison to see Delaney, but that he took advantage of the permission to administer an oath—an illegal oath. In the first place I will point out that, as I am informed, Mr. Shannon had a perfect right to administer an oath. Mr. Shannon himself has been put in the box and cross-examined on this matter. But whatever Mr. Shannon did, whatever his malpractices may have been, it is perfectly absurd to make the Government responsible. He was the solicitor of the *Times*, not the servant of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman has asked about the action of Head Constable Preston with reference to Tracy. The right hon. Gentleman does not appear to have fully grasped the fact, which I have myself stated more than once in this House, that the whole investigation with regard to Tracy had no reference to the *Times* case, but had reference to information which Tracy himself volunteered to the police in the first instance. Tracy subsequently refused to complete his information; but, even in its imperfect form, I hope it may enable the Government to get at the root of some very serious crimes in the West of Ireland. Tracy is a man who I believe has been implicated in a large number of the most shocking and criminal operations that have occurred in that part of the country. He volunteered, for reasons of his own, to give information to the police; that information he would not complete, having been restrained probably by illegitimate influences, and in visiting him Head Constable Preston was only fulfilling what was unquestionably his duty, to get to the bottom of these dark transactions. I am informed that this had no reference to the case of the *Times*, but was simply an investigation carried on by Preston for the detection of crime. It is perfectly true—and I do not deny it—that an investigation into crime in Ireland may have great relevancy to the inquiry by the Commission. I do not deny that at all, but I say that the detection of crime was his primary object, and one which would have existed had there been no Commission hearing evidence. Then the right hon. Gentleman has asked me questions about Captain Slack and Captain Plunkett. It must surely have occurred to the right hon. Gentleman that these gentlemen were over here on subpœna, and that they were obliged to stay as long as the subpœna lasted. Had they attempted to go away, I presume the Court would have interfered to prevent them going away. I wrote as strongly as I could to the authorities of the *Times*—I think in October or November—saying that the Irish Government were being put to great inconvenience by the number of constabulary and magistrates who were being brought over as witnesses, and on account of the time they were detained. On behalf of the *Times*, Mr. Soames said they would do their best to minimize the evil, and I believe they have done so; but their best has not been very good for the Irish Government. As to the case of Mr. Harrington, respecting whom the right hon. Gentleman makes the absurd allegation that he was put in prison to prevent him collecting evidence for the defence, let me remind him that if the Government had allowed Mr. Harrington to go on offending against the law on the ground that he was occupied in collecting evidence for the Commission, does not the right hon. Gentleman see that they would have been guilty of a gross neglect of their public duty? Why did not Mr. Harrington appeal? If he had, he would immediately have been let out on bail, and he would have had two or three months, at all events, to continue the investigation in which he was engaged, and which the right hon. Gentleman says was disturbed by his arrest. As a matter of fact, he did not appeal, and personally, therefore, did not rate his own services very high. So much for Mr. Harrington, Captain Slack, and Captain Plunkett. The right hon. Gentleman went into a case which he characterized as still more shocking and scandalous. He alluded to the action of District Inspector Alan in connection with the witness Walsh. Walsh, it is true, was a witness for the *Times*, but it was not in connection with the evidence he was afterwards asked to give that he was dealt with by District Inspector Alan. The dealings that Inspector Alan had with Walsh had reference to an inquiry under Section 1 of the Crimes Act of 1887, in connection with a local Land League which had been guilty of very gross malpractices. Walsh was a most important witness in that inquiry, and it was owing to his evidence that their malpractices were checked. It was in reference to that inquiry that the interview occurred, and District Inspector Alan positively and absolutely denies that he ever held out the inducement to Walsh that the right hon. Gentleman suggested—namely, that Walsh should not be proceeded against for fraud in Liverpool. That story seems to fail on the face of it, for what power had District Inspector Alan over proceedings that were to take place at Liverpool? The whole contention is not only denied by the Inspector himself, but it is absurd on the face of it. District Inspector Alan was simply concerned in an inquiry under Section 1 of the Crimes Act in which Walsh was concerned, and it was in relation to that inquiry, or to a possible prosecution in consequence of that inquiry, which led to admirable results, that this conversation took place. The Inspector assures me that he held out no inducement or threat whatever to Walsh.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Inspector did not deny Walsh's statement.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: He denied it to me.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The statement was made on oath.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Inspector could not, of course, be called to give evidence on that point. As far as I was able to take notice of the right hon. Gentleman's interrogations, these are the main points on which I am able to tell him anything; but I want to know what the right hon. Gentleman thinks is the principle which should regulate the action not only of constables and Resident Magistrates, but of every good citizen? It is the bounden duty not merely of the police, but of every man who has relevant evidence to give, to give it. There is this limitation, and this limitation only, with regard to constables and officials under Government—that they are, of course, bound not to make any disclosure of confidential matter which might be detrimental to the Public Service. Subject to that limitation, and that limitation alone, I would never suggest in public, or order in private, that any man should be restrained from giving what aid and assistance he could to the Commission. What have these men done except to give evidence? If right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite can prove that one of these men has attempted, as they say, to suborn witnesses, to pervert justice, or to conceal facts relevant to the defence, then pass what condemnation you please upon them, and I will concur in it. But, beyond the loose accusations which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) has scattered about, there is not a particle or a tittle of evidence to show that any one of these men has so far transgressed his duty or has been concerned in so scandalous and disgraceful a proceeding. In my opinion every encouragement should be given to the police to say what they know of the difficult matters now being inquired into. It is an inquiry not only of enormous magnitude, but of enormous difficulty. It deals with secret societies; it deals with crime; and not only have the police necessarily more information on those subjects than any other class of the community, but there is a special necessity for their giving it. It must be remembered that in Ireland it is the habitual and melancholy practice to intimidate witnesses. Instances may easily be found of wives refusing to give evidence against the murderers of their husbands because they were afraid to do so, and when secret societies and crime are being dealt with, this habitual intimidation reaches a point which renders investigation a matter of the most extreme difficulty. If the information the police are able to give in this matter were stopped in any way, if they are prevented from doing their best to enlighten the Commission, the difficulty under which the Commission labours will necessarily be doubled, and I would urgently suggest to right hon. Gentlemen opposite that, by the course they are pursuing in this matter, they convey the impression—an unjust one, no doubt—that they desire to burke inquiry. I will not imitate the Member for Derby and attribute motives to my opponents; but the whole method of the procedure of Gentlemen opposite in the House and the whole tone of their speeches out of the House must lead and has led many not unimpartial persons to belive that they would desire to see all the evidence at the command of the Government abstracted from the Commission, and that there is nothing they would rejoice in more than to see that avenue to the truth absolutely closed up; to see those who in certain branches of the investigation are the most competent to give information reduced to silence by their criticisms. I do not know that I have anything more to say upon the subject. So far as I am concerned, I will do everything in my power to aid the inquiry before the Commission, whether that aid be given through Mr. Soames to the *Times*, or through Mr. Lewis to the other side, or direct to the Commission at the request of the Commissioners themselves.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): It is very remarkable that the Chief Secretary, by getting up to defend himself from the charges made against him by my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), should have so far misapprehended the questions addressed to him and the charges made, that throughout the whole of his speech he has never attempted to meet any one of them. He began with observations which you, Mr. Courtney, were obliged to point out to him were irrelevant, and he then proceeded to meet a number of charges which had never been made, and then to suggest that the doctrine for which we contend was one for which we have never contended at all. That was the whole substance of the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland. Now the right hon. Gentleman is not an unintelligent man, and I think he might have apprehended what he had to answer. Therefore, I make one more attempt to explain what it is we charge against him and the Government. This Commission was appointed under the pretence—[*Cries of* "Oh!"]—yes; I call it a pretence—under the pretence that it was a tribunal to enable Irish Members to clear themselves. What have the Government done ever since? They have been employing every method in their power to make it impossible for the Irish Members to clear themselves. I will proceed to give my reasons for making that statement. The Chief Secretary has over and over again stated that Irish constables and magistrates and other officials took no part at all except to appear on their subpœnas. Of course, I do not charge the Chief Secretary with saying intentionally that which is not a fact. He says that he knows nothing about it; no doubt that is perfectly true. When interrogated as to the presence of the Irish officials in London, the Chief Secretary said they were here simply on subpœna, and solely for the purpose of giving evidence. The right hon. Gentleman seems to have had so little communication with the Attorney General that he does not know what a subpœna is. He seems to imagine that when that fatal document is delivered a man must attend for months until he is called; but I will tell the Chief Secretary that, if he ever receives a subpœna, he may tranquilly remain at home until he receives an intimation from the solicitor that his attendance is wanted the next day or the day afterwards. But we all know that that was not what Captain Plunkett and Captain Slack were kept here for. They remained here because they were doing service for the *Times*, and because the *Times* did not choose that they should go away. The Chief Secretary, in his jaunty way, gets up at that box and denies things and states things which are directly the opposite of the truth; and, owing to this spirit of recklessness and carelessness of statement, official statements have, in my opinion, been deprived of value to an extent which I never before heard of. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle, step by step, followed up the statements of the Chief Secretary, and showed that they were absolutely unfounded; but of all the charges made against him the Chief Secretary only referred to one—that as to Tracy, who was visited by Preston. What is his account of that? The right hon. Gentleman said that that had nothing to do with the *Times*—that Tracy's offence had no relation to the inquiry or the *Times*, and that Preston's visit to him was not paid in connection with the *Times*.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No; I did not say that.

Sir W. HARCOURT: No! I think I am in the recollection of the Committee. Statements are made here in the hearing of hon. Members, and are to be remembered. When a man in the position of the Chief Secretary for Ireland makes a statement here, we all remember it.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I distinctly said the reverse. I said that, no doubt, it was secret crime in which Tracy was involved, and that, like other secret crime, it had a bearing on the Commission. But the primary object was an inquiry under a section of the Crimes Act.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then I will take that statement. It has been distinctly stated by the right hon. Gentleman's Colleague the Home Secretary that Preston visited the prisoner on two occasions as the representative of Mr. Soames. Was I not right, then, in asking whether there has ever before been a Government whose official statements are so little entitled to credit? What are we to say in the face of such flagrant denials? In administering the Crimes Act, administering exceptional laws and dealings with such a proceeding as the Special Commission, what position are we in when the Chief Secretary for Ireland gets up and makes a statement of the kind in the presence of a Colleague who sits beside him who has stated that it is not the fact? That is the position the Government are in now. Why do not they cross-examine one another? Yet this is the only case which the Chief Secretary has endeavoured to grapple with, and as to the others, he said he knew nothing about them; but that did not prevent his denying the facts a few weeks ago. The Chief Secretary asks—why was there no cross-examination of Houston as to his connection with Pigott? Does he not know? It was because Houston burnt the correspondence

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The right hon. Gentleman cannot go into that matter.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then I will abstain from following it up further. The right hon. Gentleman says our position is that we desire no evidence to be given, and especially no official evidence. The right hon. Gentleman is entirely mistaken. That is not our position at all; we are of opinion that all the evidence which would elicit the truth should be given before the Commission; but, if the Government are to give it, they ought to give it upon their own responsibility under the guarantees which belong to the responsibilities of a Government. They are not to use the whole machinery of the Government without accepting the responsibilities of the Government. If the Government had desired to act in an impartial manner they would have placed the documents before the Commission and not given them into the hands of unscrupulous partizans. This is a most material matter, and it deeply affects the character of these proceedings. If this had been in form as it was in substance a criminal prosecution, then the very principle of a criminal prosecution is that the accused persons shall be made acquainted beforehand with the evidence intended to be brought against them. If the Government had intended to deal fairly with the defendants as well as with the *Times*, they would have taken care that that evidence should not have been sprung upon those defendants, or dealt with as unscrupulously as it was dealt with. This is the conduct of the Government. If the contention of the right hon. Gentleman is a true contention—that what they were doing for the *Times* they would do for the other parties—if they had said, "We have nothing to do with private faction; this is a State inquiry"—

THE CHAIRMAN: The right hon. Gentleman does not seem to appreciate the distinction I have pointed out. What we are now discussing are questions relating to administration of the Irish Government.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; I am charging against the Irish Government that they used that evidence unscrupulously and unfairly against the defendants and in favour of the *Times* newspaper. I say, if they had intended to use it fairly, they should have dealt in the same manner with the defendants, who should have known what constables and Resident Magistrate were doing. They should have placed Resident Magistrates at the disposal of Mr. Lewis as well as Mr. Soames. Why not?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: They could subpœna them.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; subpœna them—subpœna Captain Plunkett! They might just as well subpœna the Chief Secretary or the Prime Minister, who still believes in the forged letters. Really, I do not suppose the right hon. Gentleman uses that as a serious argument. There never, from first to last, has been the smallest intention to deal fairly with this evidence. It has been collected for one party, and for one party alone, and it has been collected by the agents of the Government, from the Attorney General downwards. That is our charge against the Irish Government. We do not complain that evidence should have been collected bearing in any way upon those transactions. Our charge against the Chief Secretary and the Government is that the evidence has been most unfairly dealt with; that it has been dealt with exclusively in the interests of one party; that it has been offered to—nay, thrust upon—one party alone. I have heard it said—and I should very much like to know whether it is the truth—that the *Times* newspaper, at a very early period of those proceedings, declared that unless they had the support of the whole machinery of the Government they would not go on with the case; and I should very much like to know whether it was in view of that terrible threat on the part of the *Times*, that they would withdraw from those accusations, that that machinery of the Government was placed at the disposal of the *Times* newspaper? It looks uncommonly like it. There never was an instance where anybody professing to be a private plaintiff had anything like the disposal of official resources which has been so conspicuously displayed in this case. It may be said that this is a State inquiry—a public prosecution. Well and good; if that is so, the Attorney General is in his right place. But, if that is so, it ought to have been conducted in a totally different manner and under totally different safeguards, and we should not then have had the shocking scandals, which in my opinion, have defamed the administration of justice, such as we have had exhibited. That is the charge we make against the Irish Government—a charge the Chief Secretary has not attempted to meet.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR INDIA (Sir JOHN GORST, Chatham): The right hon. Gentleman opposite has delivered one branch of the attack against the Chief Secretary, and he has warned us that there is a second to be delivered against the Attorney General. I do not think those intimations will have much effect on the House, for I doubt if there is any sensible man who does not consider that the first attack has proved an utter *fiasco*. The arguments and reasons have been furnished to the House by the right hon. Member for Newcastle, and the eloquence and elocution by his Colleague; and what does the whole thing amount to? For what purpose has the business of Parliament been interrupted? For what purpose has this debate been conducted as if it were a debate on the whole Estimates of the year, and Department after Department, and Minister after Minister, subjected to strong and violent attacks by the right hon. Gentleman? For what purpose is it that the right hon. Gentleman, who once held the responsible position of Law Adviser to the Crown, has thought it decent, inside the House and outside too, to discuss the proceedings of a tribunal which is still sitting, and to endeavour to prejudice the conduct of a case now pending before the Judges? So long as he could only throw a little dirt at Her Majesty's Government, or make a little political capital, the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly reckless whether he interfered with the course of justice or not. I do not want to confine myself to general statements. I will give the Committee two examples of the sort of way in which the right hon. Gentleman has thought it decent to deal with the case which is now pending. He was extremely eloquent because the names of witnesses were not given to the parties before the Commission. Did the right hon. Gentleman remember that in that comment he was finding fault with the decision of the Commission itself, and that the Judges had expressly decided that names should not be given for fear the witnesses might be tampered with? We have, therefore, the spectacle of the Judges solemnly deciding in the Royal Courts, and the right hon. Gentleman the temporary Leader of the Opposition and a former Law Officer endeavouring to induce the House of Commons to discredit the Government and the Chief Secretary for Ireland because they had not done what the Commission decided against. Here is another example. One of the witnesses before the Commission was Captain Plunkett. In the remarks which the right hon. Gentleman made a few minutes ago he conceived in what estimation Captain Plunkett's evidence was likely to be held, and he intimated in the very strongest way he could that Captain Plunkett's evidence was worthless and not to be believed. I am certain that so gross a violation of legal etiquette would never have been committed by an ex-Solicitor General unless he was utterly blinded by party passion, and unable to appreciate the situation. I have said that the reasons for this attack have been furnished by the right hon. Member for Newcastle. I listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and it seemed to me that a more insignificant and trumpery set of accusations against a public Department I have seldom heard, and they certainly do not excuse the delay of the House, or the interruption of public Supply business. What did it all come to, supposing all the accusations which the right hon. Gentleman had raked together were true and accurate? That a few officials of the Irish Government had shown a little too much zeal in furnishing information. ["Oh, oh!"] I am not addressing myself to the right hon. Gentleman or to hon. Members below the Gangway opposite; I am addressing myself to hon. Members who are influenced by reason and argument. I know that hon. Members below the Gangway opposite would think any trumpery accusation made against the Government good enough to cheer; but those who desire to have some real grounds will hardly agree that so extraordinary a course as that which has been taken is justified simply because a few officials in the Irish Office may have been influenced by a little too much zeal. Outside the House we hear different language. We hear of subornation of perjury, and, to do them justice, hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, at least, are consistent with their declarations out of the House; but why does not the right hon. Gentleman, when he comes to the House, make those accusations against the Government which he is so ready to make in Lambeth Baths?

Sir W. HARCOURT: If we have time enough I will do it.

Sir J. GORST: Yes; we had a promise from the right hon. Member for Newcastle that he would make those statements when he had had time to collect the facts. But does the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby always wait for facts before he makes his statements? The right hon. Gentleman is not absolutely innocent of making reckless statements. He spoke about the Chief Secretary for Ireland and his recklessness and carelessness of statement, but a very short time ago the right hon. Gentleman himself told the House the most extraordinary cock-and-bull story about the *Times* having refused to go on with the case without the support of the Government. Where is the evidence of that? What is the good of the right hon. Gentleman making statements of this kind, unless you give some authority for them? Of course they may be useful in debate. I know the real object of the tactics being pursued. The senior Member for Northampton, who always lets out the object of the course he takes in Parliament, says that right hon. Gentlemen opposite are engaged in trying to identify the Government with the case of the *Times*. They charge the Government with not being impartial. They say that from the first impartiality was a pretence. I challenge support of such a statement, when you say that a body of honourable men are guilty from the beginning of fraud and pretence.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I mentioned the Prime Minister by name.

Sir J. GORST: If we have not been impartial in the case, let right hon. Gentlemen opposite at once bring forforward proofs and a Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government. Do this now, instead of relegating it to a later period of the Session. No! you will not do that, you range about, attacking first one Minister, then another, and endeavour to get some trivial contradiction from a Minister on which you can found an eloquent denunciation. These tactics are very useful to an Opposition, but this is not the way in which the business of the House and of the country can make progress. We are engaged in passing a Vote in order that the Government of the country may be carried on; but the intelligent foreigner, who is supposed to sit in the Gallery of the House, would never guess we were engaged on anything so trivial or formal. This year it has pleased the Leaders of the Opposition to turn this ordinary and formal proceeding into an occasion for proposing, not one Vote of Want of Confidence, but for successive attacks on successive Departments of the State. The proceeding is extremely irregular, without precedent, and extremely inconvenient, and I venture to say that it will recoil upon its authors, who, in their extreme zeal in trying to damage the Government, will probably end in inflicting considerable damage upon themselves.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I beg to move the reduction of the salary of the Chief Secretary by £500, and I do that for the purpose of presenting a definite issue to the Committee on which a vote may be taken. I was very much astonished that in addition to matters of which the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said he had no knowledge, he should have so carefully ignored or omitted several special matters which certainly required his attention, and upon which I will take leave to refresh his memory. There are one or two points also that arise out of questions answered this evening upon which I should specially like to ask the right hon. Gentleman for some explanation and justification. We have had it, that untried prisoners in Ireland are now being taken in inclement weather distances of twenty miles and refused the use of warm clothing sent by friends, without any sort of reprimand from the Chief Secretary to the official who was responsible for the refusal, although in so taking them it was in itself a severe punishment for prisoners yet untried. We have had it in answer to a question, that without any kind of reprimand from the Chief Secretary passes are issued by the Constabulary in districts in Ireland, as if martial law prevailed in those districts, and as though the Constabulary had any kind of right to use any such passes under any circumstances at all. We have had it this evening that the Chief Secretary having placed a Resident Magistrate in a position where his conduct led to loss of life, and knowing that this Magistrate was charged in this House months ago with conduct of a disgraceful character, and having the means within his own hands of instantly satisfying himself by reference simply to an official gazette whether or not there were grounds for the accusations, he continued him in a position of authority until recently, and has only suspended him to-day or yesterday on overwhelming evidence, official documents of a Government Department having been brought to his knowledge. If these charges stood alone—though they are very small compared with the terms of the indictment presented by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. John Morley) — they would justify the reduction I propose. The memory of the right hon. Gentleman failed him, or his notes were not enough, for he did not deal with the case of Mr. Horne, the Magistrate, on whose conduct he had been expressly challenged, and of whom we have evidence to show that he acted as though he were expressly an agent for the *Times*, and who has been promoted either in consequence of or in spite of the help he has given to the *Times*. The Chief Secretary complains with warmth that we have not scrupled to assert that Houston was the accomplice of Pigott, that the *Times* was the accomplice of Houston, and that the Government was the accomplice of the *Times*. I will re-state the case. I do not know how far my re-statement will have the concurrence of the right hon. Gentleman, but I think it will fairly represent it. The Government have always felt bound to support the *Times*, their ally, because of the blind support the *Times* has given to the Government; that the *Times* has been the willing provider for Houston, furnishing to him large funds for what might or might not be fact, but which they were ready to hope would be fact, in order that they might destroy the political opponents of the Chief Secretary; and that Houston, if not the original suborner of perjury, paid money to an amount that could not under any circumstances have been justifiable to a person whom he wanted to speak the truth, and after he knew the tainted character of the evidence of the man who was to be called, he allowed that man to go into the box knowing that he was going to commit perjury, and gave no warning, as an honest counsel in a criminal prosecution should, to the Court and the advocates on the other side of the dangerous and tainted character of the evidence going to be presented. If the Government were not the accomplice of the *Times*, then accomplice will want a new definition in any new dictionary that comes into being. If the *Times* was not an accomplice of Houston, it certainly willingly employed Houston to discover or manufacture evidence in order to destroy the political reputation of a number of men whom it had already recklessly charged with assassination, and printed documents as though they were real, without the slightest inquiry into their authenticity. The Under Secretary for India used the expression about all three being in the same boat, and I think we shall find that they are in the same boat, and will be drowned in the sea of public indignation before these matters close. The Chief Secretary complains of the bitterness of the attack made upon himself, and he said the right hon. Member for Newcastle ought to have refrained from commenting on the proceedings of the Commission while the Commission was sitting and has not reported. But there is one incident before the Commission that has finally closed and determined an incident upon which the presiding Judge said no Report of the Commission could make the case stronger than the abandonment of the forged letters. Our accusation is, that at a time when the Government did know—they could not help knowing from confessions to their own officials and Houston, who was acting with them—of the character of Pigott, they went on with their dealings with that man, hoping that the issue of his evidence might be to blacken the character of the Member for Cork and his friends. One astounding question was put to the right hon. Member for Newcastle by the Chief Secretary. Why, he asked, were no steps taken to watch Pigott after he had admitted his letters were forgeries, and his statements lies? Steps to watch Pigott! Why we had it in evidence before the Commission that steps were taken to watch Pigott by persons controlled by the Irish Magistrates and the Irish District Inspectors who were in London. Police under the control of the Chief Secretary were told off to watch Pigott; but when they knew that he was a liar and forger, they ceased their watching, and allowed him to escape from the country. That is the case which I take leave to present against the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary in express answer to the inquiry he made. Then the right hon. Gentleman says the Government have adopted in connection with this Parnell Commission an attitude of impartiality. Well, all I can say is, that they have carefully concealed their impartiality, and we can only judge them by their acts as we know them. They seem to have pursued the most one-sided course it was possible to pursue. After it was know that Pigott's evidence was tainted, and after he himself had informed the Attorney General that it was dangerous to put him in the box Pigott was allowed to go into Her Majesty's prisons to see men——

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I know nothing about that.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: He ought to have known. If with his police here in England under his control, reporting to him, watching Members round this House, he is ignorant on grave matters of this kind, their ignorance is a crime. Remember the argument of the Government against the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid-Lothian, namely—

> "You cannot have Home Rule in Ireland because certain Home Rule Members are criminals—we will establish a Royal Commission, and have a full investigation into this subject."

At one time they were ready to lend the Attorney General himself to aid the investigation, but when the Commission is established, they allow tainted witnesses to go into prison to see men confined there for the term of their natural lives.

*Mr. A. J. BALFLOUR: The hon. Member can use what argument he likes, but the accusation he is now making has nothing to do with the Vote before the House. I have no control over English prisons.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman must be blamed if he allows men in prison in England to be visited in this way by his own constabulary. This attack, personal to himself, I submit is pertinent to the reduction I have moved. The right hon. Gentleman asks "Have we favoured one side more than the other?" and my answer is, "Yes, you have kept from the persons accused matters of great gravity that might have tended to show their innocence." If in an ordinary criminal court you charge a man with murder there is no counsel engaged for the prosecution who would dare to withhold from the counsel for the defence or from the Court and Judge matter which he knew, if made public, would invalidate the evidence on which the man would be convicted. It would be considered disgraceful and monstrous, and yet that is the disgraceful and monstrous position in which I am seeking to put the Chief Secretary by the acts of his agents. His magistrates take down evidence, and they either tell him of it or do not tell him of it, but, in either case, they could not have occupied themselves in this business without his knowing it, unless he entirely refrained from attending to the duties of his office. It is almost impossible, unless he was blind, that Horne and others could have acted as they did without his knowledge. These people, though receiving public pay, acted as though they were simply the agents of a private person. If the right hon. Gentleman had been actuated by any shadow of fairness, it would have been impossible for Shannon to go into the gaol at Maryborough and administer an oath to Delaney. The right hon. Gentleman actually said that Shannon had a right to administer an oath to Delaney.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am loth to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but I never justified the action of Shannon. All I said was that I did not think the administration of an oath on the part of Shannon was illegal.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: The fact that Shannon is a Commissioner for the Administration of Oaths—if he holds that position—does not entitle him to administer the oath except in cases where the statement may become usable in Court or in legal proceedings. It is utterly illegal for him to administer an oath to a person making a statement which, by no possibility, under any circumstances in the world, would ever have been used as evidence against anybody. If the right hon. Gentleman had no control over Shannon, he at least had some control over the Governor of the gaol in whose presence the oath was administered to Delaney. Is it possible for oaths to be administered to convicts in prison under the control of the right hon. Gentleman without responsibility attaching to anybody? and in the case of Delaney, it must be remembered that the oath was administered in order to inspire terror, the man being given to understand that the inquiry was a State inquiry into the conduct of the Queen's enemies in America and elsewhere. If this is impartiality, it must be spelled without the first two letters in dictionaries which may be prepared in the future. Then, could the right hon. Gentleman have been blind to the fact that constabulary witnesses were being detained in London for purposes other than that of giving evidence? Could he have been blind to the fact that District Inspector Seddall, who was detained in England, was never called upon to give evidence, but was occupied the whole time in getting up evidence for the *Times?* Did not Walsh declare that District Inspector Alan, in extracting information from him, had terrified him by holding up accusations of frauds and offences committed in the place where he was living? The right hon. Gentleman may say that he did not know these things, but my reply to that is, that ignorance on the part of the Government on matters of this kind is a crime. I say, when we see tainted witnesses permitted to visit prisoners in gaol, when we see agents of the *Times* getting permission to visit prisoners, when we find police constables and district inspectors endeavouring to frighten criminals into making statements, we have a right to say that the Government have not acted impartially, but have availed themselves of every weapon, however poisoned, in order to stab the reputation of their political antagonists. The Under Secretary of State for India (Sir J. Gorst) asks why the business of the country should be interrupted by this discussion, and my reply is, that it is for the purpose of making the circumstances of the case as I have described them perfectly plain. This is the only opportunity of doing so. If the Government had declared their desire to make reparation to the Irish Members whom they had assailed, we should I hope, have treated them as generous foes, but when, on the contrary, only a grudging word of apology is extorted from one Member of the Government under pressure, and at the same time they are giving the whole strength of the constabulary to watch this and watch that, to terrify this and terrify that, yet let a rascal escape who might have betrayed them, if detained, we say we are bound to delay this Vote. I agree with the First Lord of the Treasury that this is a question not for the Government, but for the country, and to the country we say that in no other kind of debate could we obtain an opportunity of singling out each Member of the Government by himself and pointing out each offence separately. We intend to do this upon the present Vote, I, upon the question of the Chief Secretary's salary, and other Members on this side upon other items, and whatever defence the Government may have to make, they may rest assured that the electors will be prepared with their verdict long before the Special Commission shall have separated.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the item of £7,000 for the Chief Secretary's Office be reduced by £500, part of the salary of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."—(*Mr. Bradlaugh.*)

MR. LEAMY (Sligo): I should like to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland, who, I see, is about to leave the House, how it is that Mr. Shannon, a Commissioner to administer oaths in the High Court of Justice of Ireland, was entitled to administer an oath in an English prison—as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary declares it to be his belief that Shannon did not act illegally in administering the oath.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): It was in Ireland he administered the oath.

MR. LEAMY: Then I have been under a misapprehension, but I question Mr. Shannon's right, as a Commissioner of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, to administer an oath, even in Ireland, as he has done. It is said that the Government acted impartially between the Irish Members and the *Times*; but it has been proved up to the hilt that police officers and constables have been collecting evidence which they took to Mr.

Soames's office. Why did they give copies of the evidence to Messrs. Lewis? It is a foul misuse of language to say that the Government have been acting impartially, and it is proved day by day that they are up to the neck in complicity with the *Times*. There is another point upon which I want information, and that is with reference to the issue of passports by the police to people going through Donegal. How many of these passports have been issued? Has the Chief Secretary condemned the practice? Are they being issued now, and how long will they be continued? This is an attempt to bar the roads, and to compel men who may not be agreeable to the police to go to them for passports. This shows how far things in Ireland have gone beyond the lines of the Constitution since the Chief Secretary came to govern the country. What, I ask, would be thought if in Wales the peasants and miners were prevented from going to their work unless they had obtained passports from the police? How England would ring with it; but because these things are done in Donegal, the Government think they are perfectly justified in their action. Ireland will have to put up with it for a time, but I am convinced that when the impartial feeling of this country comes to be expressed upon the action of the Chief Secretary, these small points, which are not now considered worthy of notice by the right hon. Gentleman, will be recollected. We on these benches have fought bigger men than the right hon. Gentleman. We have fought single-handed against the two front benches combined without being discouraged or defeated, and now that we have the English people with us, we know that we are marching on to triumph, even if Lord Salisbury sticks as close as he says he will to his office, his majority, and his money. As to the majority, the people will live when that has passed away, and we are content to trust to the verdict that they will give.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): What gave rise to the Commission first of all was that certain charges were made against Irish Members of complicity with crime, and on Conservative platforms that complicity was openly asserted and maintained. The Government, instead of putting the Irish Members upon their trial in a Court of Justice, satisfied themselves merely by making insinuations, and that I hold was absolutely dishonest. They knew they could not connect us with crime, and yet, though they were afraid to try us and attack us in the ordinary course, they did not cease to insinuate that we were connected with crime. And, the next best thing, they inspired the proprietors of the *Times* with the happy idea of anonymously attacking the Irish Members, and so, day after day, for a considerable time, anonymous articles appeared in the *Times* affecting to connect the Irish Members with the perpetration of crime and outrages. Upon those articles the *Times* and the Tory Party and the Government continued to trade, and then when the articles were found to be so silly that they had no effect on the people of England, a deliberate attempt was made, at the instigation of the Government, as it will undoubtedly and unquestionably be proved, to load the dice in the political game against the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), by causing letters to be forged and published in the *Times*. Now, the Government attempt to say that they had nothing to do with the production of these forged letters. But it will be remembered that the Government refused to give the hon. Member for Cork a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry, and that every possible obstacle was thrown in the way of the Irish Members when they demanded a proper tribunal to have these things tried. It was only when they were forced to do something that the Special Commission was appointed—a Special Commission in many respects contrary to the desires of hon. Members on these benches. And then the Government said they were going to remain perfectly impartial, and they showed their impartiality by giving their Attorney General to the *Times* to conduct its case. Now, from the very first moment that the Attorney General, a responsible Member of the Government, became connected with the *Times'* case, it was impossible to deny that the Government was on the side of the *Times*. But the Government was not satisfied with giving the services of the Attorney General. They did not even keep up the semblance of impartiality. But not satisfied with this, the Chief Secretary has again and again attempted to explain away the charge that the police had been deliberately engaged in getting up and manufacturing evidence for the *Times.* A few days before the Commission adjourned a case occurred which has not been mentioned here to-night—that of the witness Coffey, who is now in prison for contempt of Court. His story was that, instead of his going to the police to offer evidence, the police came pestering and bothering him in order to get up some story—that, in fact, a police constable called on him and invited him to give evidence, and promised that if he did give evidence against the Parnellite Party, he would be rewarded beyond his greatest expectations, and that he would not be allowed to suffer. I say that it is absolutely true that the police are going about Ireland doing everything in their power to intimidate people into manufacturing evidence, and more than one witness has acknowledged in cross-examination before the Commission that he was waited on by the police, and asked whether, if he got money, he could not give evidence. It was only by chance that the witness Coffey had stated what he had, viz., that he got £115 for telling a story of the wildest improbability, for which there was not the slightest foundation, and that in addition to the £115 he was brought over to London and kept for a long time. Nearly every one of the witnesses brought by the *Times* to substantiate the charges of crime and outrage in Ireland had been directly intimidated by the police, many of them being men over whom the police had some hold, or who had had offers of money as an inducement to give evidence. The Chief Secretary has stated that the police brought over to London were only waiting here till called on their subpœnas to give evidence; but if he had read the evidence given before the Commission, he would have seen that at the Inns of Court Hotel numbers of policemen and police-sergeants, with two Resident Magistrates, were engaged in a large room, drilling, so to speak, the witnesses as to their evidence, and I can, if necessary, give the names of those who took their evidence down. Thus we find that the Irish police, instead of merely waiting to give their evidence, have actually been employed by the *Times* at the Inns of Court Hotel and other places in getting up evidence, and giving instructions to the witnesses. From beginning to end of this black and disgraceful plot the Government have been up to their necks in the *Times* swim, not only inspiring and helping the *Times* in the publication of its articles, but making the police roam round the country endeavouring to intimidate people into coming over to tell atrocious lies against us. Moreover, they are to blame for allowing Richard Pigott to escape. The right hon. Gentleman has said he was surprised that no steps had been taken by us to guard Pigott. Why, Mr. Pigott was from the first held up to us as a most important witness for the *Times*, and one with whose evidence they could not dispense. It never entered into our heads that the Government would allow him to escape, or that they would not maintain a careful watch over him to prevent his getting away. But, after the second day of his cross-examination, when it was evident he had perjured himself and forged the letters, and had thus compromised the Government—the Attorney General having said before Pigott was examined that he had inquired into the anthenticity of the letters, and would be able to prove them up to the hilt, finding the sort of man with whom he had had to deal—would if he had had any regard for his own honour or for that of the Government——

Mr. CHAPLIN (Sleaford division of Lincolnshire): Order, order!

Mr. W. REDMOND: Or of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire.

Several Hon. Member: Order, order!

Mr. W. REDMOND: I am very much in order. I have great respect, Mr. Courtney, for you, and if you call me to order I will bow to your ruling, but I care nothing whatever for the right hon. Member for Lincolnshire——

Mr. CHAPLIN: Mr. Courtney, I rise to order, and would ask you, Sir, whether any Member of this House is entitled to impute dishonourable motives or want of regard for honour to any other Member of the House?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member's language is certainly somewhat strong, but I cannot say that it amounts to a breach of order.

Mr. W. REDMOND: The right hon.

Gentleman the Member for Lincolnshire has sat here longer than I, but he does not know so much about order as I do. I will now continue what I was saying when interrupted. As soon as it was known that Pigott could not support his original statement, and after he had got I do not know how many hundreds of pounds from the *Times* and Lords This and That, and from others all over the country — as soon as he had told Mr. Soames that he could not stand cross-examination, and when everyone had reason to believe he had swindled the *Times* and the rest of them out of their money——

THE CHAIRMAN: I am at a loss to see how the hon. Member is going to make this relevant to the subject under discussion.

MR. W. REDMOND: I think, Sir, you will acknowledge that I am in order when I say my object is to prove that Pigott's escape was with the connivance of the Royal Irish Constabulary, men who were set to guard him, and over whom the Chief Secretary has control. In whose interest, I ask, did Pigott escape? Was it in the interests of the defendants? Certainly not. Why, on the last day of his appearance in Court his cross-examination was going splendidly in their favour, and then he suddenly disappeared, although supposed to be guarded by two Royal Irish Constables. Had the case not been one of a forger and perjurer, who had swindled the *Times* out of £2,000, but rather of some unfortunate Member of Parliament who made a speech in Ireland protesting against evictions, and against whom there was but one-tenth of a shadow of the guilt laid to the charge of Pigott, would he have got to Paris or Madrid with so much ease? No; he would have been arrested before he had got ten yards from the Courts of Justice, and lodged in Scotland Yard. We have heard a good deal about the alertness of the Irish detectives in arresting Irish Members of Parliament; but we are told that Pigott escaped, because, forsooth, our side did not take steps to detain him. I say it was the business of the Chief Secretary to have prevented Pigott's escape, and it was a lucky thing for the right hon. Gentleman, and for everyone concerned in this vile plot, that Pigott did disappear. It would be interesting to know whether Pigott would have committed suicide if the *Times* agent had kept faith with him, and given him the money he asked for. Had this been done, we might have had the whole story of the truth of the matter, and have heard how Pigott was bribed by the Irish Government and the *Times* into coming over to support the case got up against the Irish Members. Under these circumstances, I think that for cool —I do not want to use an unparliamentary expression—for cool audacity, the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, that we are chargeable with Pigott's escape because we did not guard him, is unequalled. It was the business of the Government to have prevented his escape, and he would not have escaped had it not been that his escape was opportune and convenient for the right hon. Gentleman and those who have acted with him in this matter. All over the country, from north to south and east to west, the Chief Secretary has done and caused things to be done which have brought him into a notoriety never enjoyed by any other Chief Secretary for Ireland. What I have to complain of particularly is the changing of the venue in certain cases. My friend the Member for Sligo referred to what is going on in Donegal, where martial law prevails; where positively a man cannot lay himself quietly in his bed without the fear of being visited by a party of soldiers, and where no man can walk the road without being asked for his pass by some miserable, half-illiterate sub-constable, who has been put into the position because he has made himself objectionable to the people. What do you do? Instead of giving the people a fair trial, you send prisoners from Fermanagh to a place like Enniskillen, where you deliberately cause juries to be packed. What took place the other day? It was rumoured that Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners taken for the death of this Inspector of Police, were to have the venue changed to Enniskillen. What takes place in Enniskillen? The Orange drum is beat, and all round Sub-Grand Masters and Grand Masters of the Orange Association summon their lodges. Orange magistrates, Orange grand-jurors, Orangemen of position in the county, come to this Orange meeting, and they speak in terms of the utmost violence of the unfortunate death of District Inspector Martin. They speak of the atrocious character of those who caused his death, and at the end of all this oratory they wind up with the significant information to their audience and to the people of the country not to forget that these men are to be tried by a jury in the town of Enniskillen. As soon as that information is given, the Orangemen disperse to their homes, and carried the information through the county. In that way the feelings of the Orangemen have been worked upon, and you may be quite sure that if Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners are to be tried at Enniskillen, there will be a jury jolly well packed, and in all probability half a dozen of these unfortunate men, who I am sure never saw District Inspector Martin, will be hanged. Will the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary take notice of this Orange feeling, and will he issue orders to these Orange Deputy Lieutenants and Justices? Will he follow the example of his predecessor, who, when I brought a similar case under his notice, that of an Orange magistrate leading 300 men in military array against a peaceful meeting which I was addressing, struck him from the Commission? Again, I want to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman particularly to the claims for compensation made by certain people in Ireland for alleged injuries. A miserable man—a Head Constable in the County of Wexford—said that his eyes were injured, and that he could not see to work, though immediately after cross-examination he was able to take notes and write down the addresses of persons! This man has got £500 compensation, and I think a more atrocious piece of robbery than that was never perpetrated; and I take the liberty of advising the people of that district most earnestly to resist if money is levied for such a purpose as this. It really means that if a constable behaves with special atrociousness in Ireland, and he gets a scratch or a crooked look, he will be rewarded by the grant of £500. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary, with his usual attention to public affairs, has gone out. I certainly think, after the specimen we have had to-night of his conduct, that we ought to reduce his salary by one half, or three-quarters at least. [The Chief Secretary for Ireland here returned.] I am glad to see that the threat of a further reduction has brought the right hon. Gentleman back. I want to know specifically about these two cases—first, the Orange meeting in Enniskillen; and, secondly, the compensation of these men. And, thirdly, will he give us the names and addresses of the two wretched Irish constables who were sent to guard Pigott in Anderton's Hotel, and who allowed him to escape? Will the right hon. Gentleman take any action to bring these men to justice? Imagine what a great deal of trouble would have been spared if these two constables, instead of winking at Pigott's escape, had arrested him. The right hon. Gentleman has got to account for the conduct of these two policemen. But not all the waters of the Atlantic will wash them clean. They are steeped up to the eyebrows, in connection with the *Times*, in this atrocious business. In all the transactions between England and Ireland, a viler, a blacker, or more atrocious plot was never heard of. Not only the Attorney General, but the Prime Minister, a nobleman—well, I do not know whether he is a nobleman or not—has not acknowledged he was wrong. The Prime Minister and everybody else, down to the Attorney General and the very smallest clerk in the office of Mr. Soames, solicitor to the *Times*, should confess and clear themselves. [*Laughter*.] Yes; and I certainly would advise the Attorney General to confess and make a clean breast of it. Unless from the Prime Minister down to the smallest clerk in Mr. Soames' office they acknowledge they were wrong, they will go down to history as men engaged in the greatest and vilest plot ever heard of.

An hon. MEMBER called attention to the fact that there are not 40 Members present. On the House being counted a quorum was found to be in attendance.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): Mr. Chairman, upon the Vote for the salary of the Chief Secretary the question of the whole administration of Ireland can very properly be raised, because the entire machinery of Government is under the control of the right hon. Gentleman. The highest, as well as the lowest, of the Irish officials take their instructions from the Chief Secretary. It is not at all necessary that he should issue instructions in the *Gazette* or by circular, because no secret society in the world conveys its wishes to its Members so surely and secretly as the hon. Gentleman conveys his wishes to his subordinates. The right hon. Gentleman, replying to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, has to-night indulged in a great many strong epithets—epithets which struck me as being rather of the fishwife character; but the Chief Secretary scarcely attempted to meet the serious charge brought against him, the police force, and the magisterial party in Ireland, by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle submitted to the House a long list of instances taken from the evidence given before the Royal Commission, which proved beyond the possibility of dispute that Irish Resident Magistrates, Divisional Magistrates, and police have been for a considerable period engaged, not only in giving information to the *Times*, but in collecting evidence. The Chief Secretary only attempted to deal with two of the charges made, allowing the rest to go by default. He dealt with the case of the visiting of Tracy by Head Constable Preston, and the case of the visiting of Walsh by Inspector Alan. The right hon. Gentleman denied that Alan tried to influence Walsh by telling him that a certain prosecution in connection with a criminal fraud upon an insurance company would not be proceeded with against him if he would come over to England and give evidence for the *Times*. The Chief Secretary scoffed at the suggestion, because, he said, it was not in the power of the Inspector to promise Walsh immunity in respect of an offence committed against a Liverpool insurance company. But it must be remembered that the offence was committed in one of the western towns of Ireland, and that it was in that place and not in Liverpool that the prosecution in respect of the offence would have taken place. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman on that point, therefore, was utterly worthless. It is perfectly notorious in Ireland that the whole machinery of the Government—the whole of the police and magisterial forces—have been engaged in assisting the *Times*, not merely doing it in a legitimate way, but going the greatest lengths they can, in order to induce people to give evidence which would be adverse to the Irish Members, and to the other persons charged by the *Times*. The Chief Secretary has laid down a proposition that it is the business of the Government to supply all information in their possession for the purposes of this investigation. All that is quite true, but it must be borne in mind that the object of this inquiry is to consider charges and allegations made by the *Times* newspaper against certain Members of this House and others. It must be assumed that when the *Times* made the charges and allegations they had some foundation for the charges and allegations they made, and, therefore, I submit it was not the business of the Government to go beyond giving the *Times* whatever information they asked for. It was not the business of Government to volunteer information to the *Times*—to volunteer evidence which the *Times* could not possibly know anything about at the time they published their articles. Now let me refer to the evictions which have taken place at Falcarragh, and to the resistance made by the people at those evictions, resulting in the trial at Enniskillen before Judge Johnson. It was proved at the trial that the bailiffs who were employed to execute the decrees of possession were not the ordinary bailiffs who had been hitherto, under all previous Acts of Parliament, employed in similar circumstances. I have been told that under the Act of 1887 a landlord, when he has got a decree of possession, is entitled, contrary to the practices under all previous legislation, to appoint his own bailiff. That may be good law, but I submit to the Solicitor General for Ireland that it is a most inexpedient thing that such a proceeding should be encouraged. In the case I refer to, it was proved that a most disgraceful and scandalous scene took place at the evictions. At the present time there are certain people, a kind of freebooters, engaged in carrying out evictions. These men do not go in the professional manner that ordinary bailiffs employed by a sheriff would do, but they go like a pack of freebooters in an enemy's country, and behave themselves accordingly. The men employed in the Falcarragh evictions were not satisfied to take the houses by assault, or by any other of the methods employed by regular bailiffs, but they commenced a cannonade or fusilade with stones at the houses whenever the people presented themselves at the windows. The result was that many people were seriously hurt. Her Majesty's mail cart happened to be passing by and a passenger was struck by a stone thrown by an emergency man. The passenger applied to the Resident Magistrate for redress, but that gentleman refused to take any action in the matter. I mention this in order to urge on the Government the desirability of acting upon and enforcing the suggestions that Judge Johnson made at the trial. He said, in passing sentence on the prisoners, that, when charging the Grand Jury, he was under the impression that the writs had been addressed to the Sheriff, instead of to obscure and irresponsible persons; and he expressed a strong opinion that in all such cases it would be most desirable that the writ should be addressed to the sheriff of the county. The reason of this opinion was quite obvious. I hope that, although landlords are quite within their right in employing these men, when the forces of the Crown are applied for in order to assist in carrying out evictions, the Government, under such circumstances as those I have narrated, will consider the very wise suggestions of Judge Johnson, and will hesitate before they send the military and police, and thereby give their sanction to such disgraceful and outrageous proceedings as took place at Falcarragh. I pass now to questions relating to what is called the material interest of the country. When the Government came into power a few years ago, one of the great planks in their platform was a Local Government for Ireland, similar to English Local Government. In addition to that, Ireland was to have a great scheme of public works. Years have passed, and the only outcome of the promises of the Government has been a scheme for drainage, which was brought in last year by the Chief Secretary in the form of Private Bills. It is true, they were read a first time, but no serious effort was made to get them passed. The fact that objection was raised to the Bills being taken after 12 o'clock at night was made a great handle of in the country. No less a personage than the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself spoke of the alleged obstruction of business, and pointed out that the Irish Members were responsible for the absence of the material development of Ireland. I characterize that as an utter and hollow sham, because, when the Bills were introduced, they were not introduced with the intention of their being passed. I believe that the Bills were utterly inadequate and insufficient for the object they were supposed to have. In my opinion they were merely intended as a sop to the people, who were expecting the Government to fulfil their pledges. As a matter of fact, the introduction of the Bills has had a very injurious effect upon the material development of Ireland. There are, at the present time, in force in Ireland some very useful Drainage Acts. They are capable of great improvement, no doubt, and would be improved if the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Public Works were carried out. But since the Government promised legislation in a direction opposite to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, the result is that, whereas in former years certain work was being done every year, under the existing Drainage Acts, since the Government intimated their intention of legislating in respect of drainage, the whole of the operation of existing Acts has been suspended. While no new legislation has been passed, the existing Acts are now practically at a standstill. The whole scheme of the Barrow Drainage will be a *fiasco*, and when it is perfected the public and the Government will wish that it had never been commenced. Only quite recently the scheme was condemned at a public meeting in the Queen's County. I submit that, for all practical purposes, it is out of the power of anyone to properly criticize the scheme before the Committee of this House or of the House of Lords, and to submit that the Bill can be much more satisfactorily dealt with on the Second Reading in this House, where the opinions of many persons acquainted with the subject can be taken. I trust that we shall have an opportunity of considering it on the Second Reading, and that we shall not be treated as we were last year by the Chief Secretary throwing the scheme at us after 12 o'clock at night, and telling us that if it was not discussed then it would not be considered at all. With regard to the general policy of the Chief Secretary, I contend that it has been a complete failure. Even those who sympathize with the Party with which the right hon. Gentleman is connected in Ireland, and who originally used to be loud in their praises of the heroic action of the right hon. Gentleman, have learned to considerably modify the eulogistic terms in which they speak of him. The condition of things between the people and the police is infinitely worse than it ever was in the whole of my experience—a result directly to be attributed to the policy of exasperation adopted by the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I think it the duty of English Members to take part in this discussion, seeing that the matter is one which affects us all. The Police Force of Ireland is paid for out of the National Exchequer; therefore I think it is the duty of English Members to criticize the action of the Chief Secretary with regard to that force; and I am bound to say, from the close examination I have been able to give the subject, I have come to the conclusion that the policy of the right hon. Gentleman in this matter has been completely destructive of the interests of the country. The Ministry have their own policy with regard to the Government of Ireland and we have ours, and it is for experience to show which is right; but the position of affairs has lately very much widened by the indiscriminate use of the Irish Police in connection with the Special Commission now sitting in the Strand. If it has come to this—that the Police Forces in this country are to be used for the purpose of attacking and blackening the characters of Members of this House—I do not know who is safe. The Government stand charged with using the Executive Forces of the Crown for the purpose of blackening the character of a Party in this House; and it is not enough to say they have not succeeded in it, for, as a matter of fact, the result has been to blacken themselves instead of their opponents. Worse than this, the conduct of the Chief Secretary has been completely demoralizing to the Police Force itself, for what can be more demoralizing than to use the Police Force to advance a cause which is founded upon forgery and perjury? The whole thing is demoralizing, not only to the cause itself, but to the people governed. The Police Force of Ireland has cost us an enormous sum of money, and this comes home to the people of England. I, for one, object to my constituents being charged to keep up a system such as the Chief Secretary is now carrying out. His policy is irritating to the people. The object of a Government should be to cement the people to themselves and to the law; but the policy at present guiding the Irish Administration is exactly the reverse—it is one which irritates the people; and history shows us that more Empires have been wrecked by maladministration of that sort than by any obstinacy on the part of the people. So far as the Amendment before the Committee is concerned, I cordially support it; and if I have any fault to find with it, it is that it is too modest, and does not propose to reduce the salary of the Chief Secretary by a sufficient sum. I should have preferred the Amendment if it had proposed to reduce the right hon. Gentleman's salary by half the amount, for, even with half his salary, I should hold he was overpaid for his present misgovernment of Ireland. I trust that the effect of this discussion will be to alter the position in which we stand in respect of the use of the forces of the Crown in Ireland. I am convinced that if the people of England only knew how their money was being squandered in this respect in order to support the Irish landlords and an oppressive Administration, that the Chief Secretary would not occupy his present position ten minutes longer. If the country were polled to-morrow, unquestionably to-morrow would be the last day of the existence of the present Government. Evictions have been carried out in Ireland which have resulted in the death of persons evicted, and I maintain that the conduct of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary is stained with crimes like that. I maintain that, for one man who has died in Ireland from any attempt to break the law, ten have been killed by evictions. On behalf of my constituents, I declare that we object to the use of the forces of the

Crown at these evictions, and for backing up the *Times* in its policy of forgery and lying.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has referred to the man Tracy in an insinuating manner. Well, if he had any charge to make against the man, or if there was anything behind what he was saying, the proper course for him to have pursued was to have put his facts before the House like a man. I do not know that anyone has ever been worse treated by the Irish Office than I myself, with regard to papers seized in my house. I was subpœnaed to produce certain papers, and I had not got them, as they had been destroyed. Many of them were of no value, and even these that were of value were not my property, but the property of persons who had corresponded with me, so I thought it my duty to destroy them. But the Government did not destroy the copies they had, and as soon as the Special Commission was opened they were produced for the use of the *Times'* lawyers. I do not say that the Government were not justified in their action—at all events in producing some of these letters, if they threw light on the inquiry, but in giving up these private documents the Government should have submitted them to the Judges, and not to the *Times*, to be garbled and used in any manner the *Times'* counsel thought proper. There was any amount of whispering in the Court about the seriousness of the matter in my letters; and the Attorney General, in his long, dull, stupid speech, which was a hybrid between a churchman's and a lawyer's, made an enormous deal of the matter. The Attorney General in this way fished to see if he could get informers to prop up the case of the *Times* by making accusations for which there was not a scintilla of foundation. I say, Sir, that conduct such as this is calculated to bring not only the Government into contempt, but the law of the land. There was nothing in the case against me, except evidence which the Attorney General extracted from perjured informers, and which would not have been listened to even by a Dublin jury. If the Government were anxious that a fair investigation should be made, why did they not call the Resident Magistrates and others from the district in which I live, whom they brought over to give evidence on behalf of the *Times*, to give evidence as to my character and antecedents. The Attorney General shelters himself behind his brief, but he got his brief from himself; and if he had looked at the matter as a man of honour, surely he would have seen that there was no foundation for the infamous charges made against my character. With regard to another matter last August I received an invitation from my constituents to go down to the district of Portumna. The complaint was raised that there were no efforts being made to get up subscriptions for the defence of those who were being prosecuted by the *Times* before the Commission, and, having a desire to address my constituents on the subject, I went down to Portumna. As we were acquainted with the practices of the Constabulary in connection with popular demonstrations in Ireland, we came to the conclusion that if our meeting were advertised there would be a Proclamation from Dublin Castle to prohibit it. The result was that we decided upon sending round a circular to the people to the effect that I intended to address a meeting in the open air at the chapel; and as the police were in the habit of resorting to the chapel yard on Sunday, though the meeting was in one sense private, it was public so far as the police were concerned. There was not time for a Proclamation to come down from Dublin Castle forbidding the meeting. Well, the meeting was held, and we intended to talk about the magistrates and the Chief Secretary and the Government, and all that, without the slightest interference on the part of the police. We also should have introduced the question of subscriptions to meet the *Times'* charges. Now, if that had been kept in the background we should not have been molested, and the police would not have violated law and order as they did. No sooner, however, did I get on the platform than Mr. Reid, the District Inspector, and his police came up, armed to the teeth, with a dreadful look on their faces, and disturbed us. I asked if he had got any order from Dublin Castle to stop the meeting. I said we had a perfect right to hold the meeting; but, said he, "If you are not off the ground in a short time I will let you see."

Of course we had to yield to the argument of hard steel, and we then proceeded with our procession, break, cars, and band into unproclaimed Tipperary, where we had, instead of the small gathering we originally contemplated, a monster meeting. Now I would ask the Chief Secretary, or the civil, quietly-speaking Solicitor General, whether the tactics pursued by the police are not only inefficient for their own purposes; but, remembering the condition of things that exists, are they not likely to lead to scenes of bloodshed? We hear much of outrage and assassination and incitement to violence, and many a hasty word uttered on a platform is referred to in this House; but if the account were fairly balanced, I think the danger of incitement would not be found on our side. There was another instance. Father Cohen's car was to be sold for rent, and I, with my hon. Friend the Member for South Tipperary, decided to have a demonstration, and obtain the means for giving the reverend gentleman a new car. Accordingly a meeting was announced. On this occasion Mr. Reid took the precaution to write to Dublin, and so we had the usual Proclamation with "God save the Queen," and here let me say how I regret that the name of the highest lady in the land should be so continually dragged into these proceedings. You cry out often that Her Majesty's Writs will not run. What does that mean but that Her Majesty's subjects object to extermination? Well, this time we had a Proclamation staring us in the face, but it stated that no meeting should be allowed to disturb the sale, and so we determined there should be no disturbance. The sale was over, and then we decided in a Constitutional manner to hold our meeting and express our sympathy with Father Cohen. But Mr. Reid came to the front again, talked about illegality and proclamations; and, though we argued the point, in the result we yielded to the bayonet argument on his side, and once again formed procession and headed for Tipperary, this time not so for off. We started, but on reaching the bridge we found our further progress barred by a line of police with bayonets. There we were, a peaceful procession of people about to express our sympathy with a local priest, acting perfectly legally, not insulting or meddling with any human being, doing as the law required, going into an unproclaimed district; but there on the bridge were the fixed bayonets before us. O'Connor and I walked on in front. Mr. Reid, the District Inspector, came up in great haste, there was some whispering and "colloguing" among the police, and then we were allowed to pass. And so we had a demonstration ten times more effective than if we had been allowed to carry out our original intention. I do not know if the Chief Secretary has any explanation of these things and I do not much care. You may hear him speak for hours in this House; but go to Galway and you will see the state of the facts which I have described, but in mere outline, the skeleton. If I were to go into the subject of evictions, and show you how the whole efforts of the Government are directed against these poor mountaineers, to turn them out of the homes their own efforts have made comparatively comfortable out of a desert waste—if I were to go into that and show you how these homes are torn down, how Her Majesty's soldiers, the Scotch Fusiliers, with bagpipes playing, go about levelling these homes, doing all this in the name of the Queen—if I went into this, I should also say that, though all the laws made since the time of Moses, though all the powers that ever ruled mankind, though all the writers that ever wrote, said differently, the people are right in defending their homes.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): In the course of the debate this evening the attention of the Committee has been called in a very marked manner by the forcible speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle to the manner in which the Irish police have been placed at the disposal of the managers of the *Times*, and not only the police, but Resident Magistrates and all the paraphernalia of law and order in Ireland. As so much has been said and so well on the matter, I will not detain the Committee with my observations upon it at any length. What I have to say is by my calling attention to the manner in which, directly and indirectly, the forces of the, Crown in Ireland, and more especially the Resident Magistrates and the Constabulary, have used those who have endeavoured to collect and bring forward evidence on behalf of the defendants in the celebrated *Times* case. My hon. Friend (Mr. Harris) has referred to Galway, and to meetings called for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for the defendants, and the manner in which these meetings have been ruthlessly suppressed by the Constabulary; and one might have thought that, if only to preserve an outward show of decent impartiality, the police in such instances would have received censure from the Chief Secretary. But the same thing, and that in a much more offensive manner, has occurred from time to time in County Kerry. We hear much declamation about equal laws and equal justice; but what can the outraged peasant of Kerry think of a system which to his knowledge from reading, and from his personal knowledge of local events, places the whole machinery of the police unreservedly at the disposal of *Times*' agents, while, on the other hand, meetings to promote subscriptions for the support of the defence of their own Members against the charges made by the *Times* are dispersed? Before the House adjourned at Christmas the conduct of officials in County Kerry was brought before the notice of the Chief Secretary. I regret to say mention of Kerry has been frequently before the Commission, and a number of outrages have been referred to in the evidence of Resident Magistrates, Commissioners, or whatever they are called. The information given was brought forward under circumstances of great suspicion, into which I will not now enter, but of which we may hear something when the Commission re-assembles. Upon the real or alleged outrages in Kerry the *Times* case appeared very strong; but when my hon. Friend (Mr. Harrington), who now lies under the barbarous sentence of six months' imprisonment, directed, in association with friends who know the localities, inquiries to be made and information to be collected relative to the issues before the Commission, the persons they employed in this duty were hunted by the police from place to place, arrested in many instances, and sent to prison. Three young men from the town of Killarney on a Sunday morning were engaged in collecting evidence for the purpose I have described. They carried with them certain tabulated forms to be filled up with reference to such debates as rentals, valuations, the value of improvements made by the tenantry, and other matters relevant to the inquiry now proceeding. From house to house these young men were followed by the police, and at last, while they were engaged in taking down information in the house of a tenant, the police insisted upon entering. The tenant endeavoured to prevent the trespass, and the young men explained their business; yet, notwithstanding, these young men were arrested on the spot, taken to the nearest police barracks, and on the next morning sent to gaol. We asked for an explanation of the circumstances here, and after that process of interrogation, which Conservative papers call "badgering Ministers," we had the satisfaction of a declaration that the papers taken from these young men would be restored, and that if no other charges were formulated against them they would be released in due course. There were really no charges whatever, though there was the usual attempt to trump up a charge of intimidation. It was, however, perfectly clear that the business of these men was collecting evidence as to the condition and treatment of their countrymen; but we have never heard from that day to this that the Chief Secretary has caused any inquiry to be made into this matter, no word of apology to the men unjustly arrested, or of censure for the police who behaved in this way. All that was done was the return of the papers seized. Does not the Committee conceive that police intimidation of this kind may go a long way to provoke violence in Kerry? If the Irish Administration had any conception of the elementary laws of administration, they would have instituted a searching inquiry into such matters when brought to their knowledge, and have given specific orders to the Constabulary not to interfere with, except to facilitate, the work upon which these men were engaged. Similar things have occurred in other parts of Kerry, and persons engaged in collecting evidence have found it necessary to receive what is equivalent to that passport which now obtains in Donegal giving to the local police an explanation of their mission and satisfy the official mind of their *bona fides*. Is not this a scandalous condition of things, another proof—a negative proof—

added to the positive proofs brought forward—that the Government, instead of acting impartially, have used all their energies to support the *Times*, whenever it was possible, to burke and stifle inquiry, and to prevent the elucidation of truth on the evidence brought before the Commission?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): I was very much struck by an observation of the Chief Secretary in defending the action of an Irish Inspector with regard to charges made against a man named Walsh, and he defended him on the ground that Inspector Alan discovered evidence connected with Walsh in the course of a secret investigation held under the 1st section of the Crimes Act. Now, the moment I heard that, my mind was directed to finding out what amount of accuracy his statement contained. I remembered that there is a provision in the Act requiring the publication in the *Dublin Gazette* of quarterly Returns showing the number of inquiries held under the 1st section, the place where held, the hours of inquiry, the number of days occupied, the number of summonses issued, the names of witnesses examined, the number and names of persons committed for contempt, and the result of such inquiries. I therefore assumed that, as the Act is only two years old, the law would have been complied with. But will the Committee believe that the advocates of law and order—the gentlemen who proclaim their anxiety to give us the letter of the law—for the two years the Statute has been in force have never complied with the law? Here is the *Dublin Gazette* pure as a virgin of all information on the subject of secret inquiries during the last two years. We are, therefore, unable to check the statement of the right hon. Gentleman as to the inquiry, and may assume that no such inquiry was held, or else we must assume that the law has not been complied with. We spent months or weeks over the Secret Inquiry Clause, of which, I daresay, Mr. Courtney, you have painful recollection, and at last we got the Government to assent to certain provisions on this subject; but I have searched the *Gazette*, and, as I say, I find no record. Then I may ask the Committee, if we have a Government that will break a Statute like this, which is in the public mind and before the public eye, what may these proceedings be in private which we have no means of checking, what illegality may they not commit in furthering the interests of a gentleman like Mr. Walter and a journal like the *Times?* That is a subject which no doubt will be foundation of inquiry later on. I turn now to other matters in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I will take this case of Walsh as a sample of the veracious, the candid manner in which the right hon. Gentleman deals with a subject before the House. He said it was out of the power of the District Inspector in any way to intimidate the witness Walsh in connection with the secret inquiry which the right hon. Gentleman dragged in by the hair and horns—so to speak. He said it was impossible for Inspector Alan to intimidate Walsh, though he said Walsh confessed that he was a fraudulent person; that he had been guilty of various thefts and embezzlements; that it was quite impossible that the Inspector, Alan' could offer the man any guarantee of immunity, because he was an Irish District Inspector, and the crime was committed at Liverpool. Will the Committee believe there is not a shred of foundation for that statement? It is true that the head office of the insurance company who would be the prosecutors was in Liverpool; but it would be a new doctrine of law to say that a man was to be tried in Liverpool for an offence committed in Ireland because the company against whom he committed the offence had their head office in Liverpool. I suppose the right hon. Gentleman got that idea into his head through having had so much to do with changes of venue. The right hon. Gentleman is not a bit abashed or ashamed; and, of course, hon. Members below the Gangway opposite are as proud of him as ever. Well, if Members on this side were detected day after day, and night after night, in making statements which turned out on examination to be without foundation, Irish constituents, who are accused of sending men into this House without regard to their honour and character, would, I believe, quickly dismiss such a man from his position. The right hon. Gentleman has no apology to offer or mitigation to suggest, but rides off on the statement, which, he said, showed that the right hon. Member for Newcastle must be wrong, that District Inspector Alan told him so; and here someone said why was he not called on the point? Whereupon the right hon. Gentleman, receiving inspiration from that distinguished fount, the learned Attorney General, said: "He could not be examined on the point because it was not relevant to the issue." Then, what becomes of the statement that we could have examined Mr. Soames as to the way in which he got up his evidence? I myself tried to cross-examine Mr. Soames, and was at once met by the chief ally of the *Times* on the Bench—namely Mr. Commissioner Smith!——["Order!"]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member must withdraw that remark.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I respectfully submit that I am not speaking of any Judges of the land, but of Royal Commissioners. ["Withdraw!"] They are Royal Commissioners appointed by Statute, and are not even mentioned in the Act as Judges. They are mentioned in this way—"Sir Archibald Levin Smith, or Sir something Smith, and Sir something Day." ["Order!" *and* "Withdraw!"] These Commissioners have not the power of sentence possessed by the Judges, and I respectfully suggest that I am entitled to deal with them as Commissioners. But, of course, I will withdraw if you, Sir, rule that I am out of order. ["Withdraw!"]

THE CHAIRMAN: I must call upon the hon. Member to withdraw the remark.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I will do so without any more words, and will say that I was at once met by Mr. Justice Smith with the inquiry, "How is that relevant to any issue?" In the same way I meet the suggestion of the Chief Secretary when he says that we could have cross-examined Mr. Soames as to how he got up his evidence. I meet him in this way, "How, and in what way, is this relevant to the issue?" The Committee must remember that the witness Walsh stated that he was compelled by Sub-Inspector Alan to come forward to give evidence against the local priests in County Mayo, because, if he did not, he would be prosecuted for felony and fraud. In fact, there was not a single witness who came forward for the *Times*, of the informer class, who was not either an ex-highwayman, a man who had suffered penal servitude, or was excused from doing so by the police. The Irish Secretary has, I believe, given an answer on that point. He says the fact that they were unable to obtain evidence was owing to the melancholy state of Ireland. Well, according to the Treasury Bench, Ireland is always in one of two conditions—it is always either in a melancholy condition or a condition of great prosperity. If they want to show how the Crimes Act is working, then Ireland is happy, prosperous, and contented. Her Majesty's Judges are being presented with white gloves all over the country, people are settling down, cattle are a pound a head dearer, and the banks have two millions more of investments; but, on the other hand, if we want Local Government, or any concession from the Ministers which will benefit the country, then Ireland is in a most terrible condition—a most melancholy condition. When we say, "Why do not you get proper and suitable evidence?" Ireland gets into a "melancholy condition!" I should have thought that, under the right hon. Gentleman's wise administration, Ireland would have thrown over all its evil practices, and that the law once more would have re-asserted itself in all its majesty, and that, with the power and intelligence of such Resident Magistrates as Captain Segrave, whose firmness, courage, and independence are above all praise, intimidation had been for ever laid at rest. But, oh! that is not the case at all. For the purposes of the *Times*' inquiry, intimidation is so rampant that the widow of a murdered man is afraid to come forward to face a murderer; that is the result of two and-a-half years of this administration. One-sixth of the period of 20 years' resolute government has expired which was to restore Ireland to the golden rule, and yet these are the extraordinary admissions which come from the Front Bench opposite. I trust the Liberal Unionists will take note of this admission—that law and order have absolutely no friends in Ireland except the police. Probably, this is an admission made by the right hon. Gentleman in one of his unguarded moments—probably, the Committee will do well to correct the Chief Secretary's speech of Thursday by the Chief Secretary's speech of Monday; and, probably, if the Committee could remember what the right hon. Gentleman says on Monday, it would come to the conclusion that his speech on Monday requires no reply from us. It is because the Committee and the House has a knack of forgetting on Monday what was said on Thursday, and of forgetting on Thursday what was said on Monday, that it is necessary for us to make these exposures in this House. So much for the Walsh part of the case. With regard to the Shannon incident, the Irish Secretary stated that he was no more responsible for Mr. Shannon than any Member on the Opposition side of the House. Is that true or not? Who admitted Shannon into Maryborough Prison? Did he get in over the wall? The right hon. Gentleman gave him the order to see the convict Delaney, who had been sentenced to death and reprieved, and who was also an ex-highwayman, and therefore the most suitable witness for the *Times.* Shannon saw Delaney and administered the oath to him. Oh, Sir, the value of the oath of Delaney! What a sweet savour it must have had under the nostrils of the Attorney General! I am sure the suggestion that Shannon should get Delaney to give the additional sanctity of an oath to his statement emanated from the pious brain of the Attorney General. There was in it that touch of purity, that determination to do everything that was noble and becoming to the Leader of the Bar. If we could only probe this matter, we should find, I am persuaded, that Shannon took into Maryborough the Family Bible of the Attorney General. Shannon had access to the prisoner Delaney; when, however, I tried to see Mr. W. O'Brien in Clonmel Gaol, I was refused admission. But then Mr. O'Brien had the misfortune not to be an Invincible, and, not being a *Times* witness, I and a solicitor, also a Member of this House, were refused permission to see Mr. O'Brien for the purposes of his defence until the matter attracted the attention of Mr. Baron Dowse. That was fair play, fair dealing, and impartial conduct on the part of the Chief Secretary in the right hon. Gentleman's own opinion, but it is not so in mine. I now pass from the Shannon incident. The House will remember the splendid way in which the Irish Secretary gets over all his difficulties. He certainly has adopted most unfair tactics in this House, his manner of getting over his difficulties being altogether without precedent—a manner in which I have never seen any official try to get over difficulties before. He says, "Bring your charges," and when we cite four or five different cases, the right hon. Gentleman selects the most trivial, and gives a sort of reply to it, more or less indifferent, and then says, "With regard to the other cases, I know nothing about them." That is the style of the right hon. Gentleman. He does not even take the trouble to get up his facts with regard to these Irish cases. Surely it is due to his character as a statesman that he should treat these matters in a more solid fashion. Surely he should give more value for the handsome salary he receives—though, of course, we know that it is on this side of the House that all the paid agitators sit. We are sure on this side of the House that the £5,000 a-year the right hon. Gentleman draws is always dropped into the poor-box. I maintain that we are entitled in these cases to a distinct answer with regard to the charges we bring, and it is in the ability of the right hon. Gentleman to give these answers that we can test his statements as to the desire of the Government to give real assistance to the Special Commission. We have asked how it is that the police have provided for their informers first-class and third-class railway tickets; and it is fair to ask, if it is only the function of the police to assist in bringing forward cases, why do they make themselves the caretakers and pilots of the *Times'* witnesses? The *Times'* informers are as much personally conducted to the Royal Commission Court as a party of Cook's tourists are by those who take them round to see the sights. What, then, comes of this pretended impartiality on the part of the Government? The trick about subpœnas does not avail in the case of Mr. Horne, the Resident Magistrate, who has just been promoted 37 steps at a time for taking down the statements of witnesses as the *Times* proofs. I asked the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary a question today about Mr. Horne—as to his promotion—and the right hon. Gentleman was careful to answer one portion of the question and omit the most important part of it. May I now ask him for an answer? In addition to asking over how many of his seniors Mr. Horne had been promoted, I asked how long was Mr. Horne engaged in collecting the evidence was used by the *Times* before the Special Commission, but to that the right hon. Gentleman did not deign to give any reply. You cannot talk about subpœnas in the matter of Mr. Horne. Here is an Irish Resident Magistrate, with a salary of £500 or £600 a-year, who is said to be of great value for the purposes of the detection of crime in Ireland, engaged in London preparing evidence for the *Times*. Now I rejoice to think that Mr. Horne has been so successful in detecting crime; but is the Strand or Fleet Street a "disturbed district"? Is the Inns of Court Hotel a proper venue for the exercise of Mr. Horne's great ability? Was it to take down the *Times*' proofs that he was brought over? As far as I can recollect, the evidence for the *Times* began on the 21st of October, but Mr. Horne was in London long before that time, and I should like to know when Mr. Horne did come? This system of issuing hundreds of subpœnas—throwing the net over all the Irish police barracks—is a transparent farce and humbug. I say you are defiling the avenues of the law and abusing judicial processes by bringing over these men on subpœna, and then never calling them or attempting to call them. You say, "Oh, they were brought over in obedience to subpœna!" But my answer is, the way to test that would have been for the right hon. Gentleman to give me the Return I asked for. I asked for a Return showing the number of policemen who had been brought over from Ireland, the number called, and the time those who were not called remained in London. That would have put the right hon. Gentleman to the test, but it was refused. Mr. Horne might have been here on subpœna, but the subpœna was humbug, and I charge upon the Attorney General that he must have been concerned in a direct deception when he directed a whole series of subpœnas—["Order, order!"]—if, having issued those subpœnas, there was no intention of calling the witnesses.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. E. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I never directed a single subpœna to be served.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like to know who advised the proofs? If the Attorney General did not direct the subpœnas to be served he failed in his duty, and did very little for the £1,500 he got on his brief. Who directed the subpœnas to the Irish constables? It is the duty of someone to advise the proofs, and, so far as I know, that duty is supposed to fall upon the senior counsel in the case. The hon. and learned Gentleman says he did not do that. Who, then, brought over these constables? How long were they here? If there was no intention of calling them, why did not the Irish Secretary take some steps to see that judicial process was not being abused in this way? Mr. Soames issued a circular, in which he informed the *Times*' witnesses that they would be served with subpœnas when their attendance was required in London. Why was that circular not sent to Captain Plunkett and Captain Slack? Now, in the month of March, the Government are very anxious that it should not be supposed that they are rubbing skirts with the *Times*, and would have us to understand that they are conducting business on the water-tight compartment system. They wish us to believe that the Government have nothing to say to the Attorney General, and that the Attorney General has nothing to say to the Government. Captain Plunkett, Mr. Andrew Reid, the Inspector General of Constabulary, told me on one occasion, had been in London for several weeks past. I asked him, "Does not his attendance here dislocate the public service?" and his reply was, "Oh, yes, it does, and we wish he were back in Dublin." Hon. Members will find that in the Blue Book relating to the incident which took place one night here in the Lobby. Fearing that Captain Plunkett was dying of *ennui* while here in London and found time hanging heavily on his hands in the evening, I was anxious that he should return to his official duties in Ireland, and so I asked how long Captain Plunkett had been absent from his duties, whether his pay continued during his absence, whether arrangements similar to those made with other persons subpœnaed by the *Times*, that witnesses should have notice when they were required, had been made with him? The Solicitor General for Ireland, in reply, stated that, with the exception of a short interval, Captain Plunkett had been in London since the 22nd October; his examination, be it remembered, not taking place till February, so that at least one-third of the £1,000 a-year you are going to vote him to night he has no right to, as he was acting for and paid by the *Times* all the while. The Solicitor General for Ireland also said Captain Plunkett's pay continued during his absence, and it was unnecessary to give Captain Plunkett instructions; that the Government were most anxious to have him back in Ireland; but he was bound to remain in London in obedience to his subpœna, and the time of his examination was a matter over which he had no control. This was before the discovery that Captain Plunkett's absence was a source of embarrassment to the Irish Government; that embarrassment was not discovered until the discovery of the Pigott frauds. It will thus be seen that so far back as December the attention of the Government was called to the needless absence of Captain Plunkett from Ireland, and to the fact that in the case of other *Times*' witnesses there was a notification that they need not attend until notice was sent. Why was not a similar course pursued with regard to Captain Plunkett? He was being kept here against the will and in spite of the wishes of the Government, just about as much as Le Caron was called in spite of their wishes, both of them having been subpœnaed and called by the Attorney General, who, if he had not wished to have them here, would have refused to cause the Government the embarrassment which the Irish Government suffered by the absence of Captain Plunkett. When he was at last called Captain Plunkett had not a word to say, and if he said very much we should have published about him a letter that is not forged, and Captain Plunkett's continuance in the Public Service after the publication of that letter would have been about as precarious as that of Mr. O'Neill Segrave after the Government first learned what had happened in his case. But I will pass from this subject. Captain Plunkett may go back and earn his thousand a-year as far as I am concerned. I now come to Captain Slack. He was here for 60 days, and if anyone will turn to the evidence given by him and Captain Plunkett he will see that the pretence that these persons were really wanted for any genuine purpose is all nonsense, because the amount of the evidence they gave was *nil*—at any rate it contained nothing relevant to the issue. What they were here for was to put pressure on the Constabulary officers and privates, and also for the purpose of aiding in getting up the proofs wanted by the *Times*, just as much as Mr. Horne was here for the purpose of directing the *Times*' proofs. With regard to the case of the man Tracy, the Chief Secretary says this man was visited by Head Constable Preston in Millbank Prison on a letter from Mr. Soames, and he gives as the reason for this visit that Tracey had been concerned in most serious and abominable crimes in Ireland. Now, if Tracy had been concerned in such crimes, why was he not tried for them? The Chief Secretary is probably under the idea that the man Tracy is in Millbank under sentence. Nothing of the kind; he could walk out of prison to-morrow were he so minded. The fact is that he is there of his own free will, and is kept there, in lavender, by the police, fed by them, and supplied with luxuries by them. Let us see what are the facts. What is the abominable crime Tracy has committed? Will the House believe that Tracy has been for months and months in prison in Ireland, at first in Sligo, and then in Belfast, where there was ample opportunity for the Irish Government to send Head Constable Preston to him, and finally in Millbank? And for what has he been in gaol all this time? He is in gaol because he refuses to find a £5 bail to be of good behaviour. And why was he called on to find a £5 bail? He was never brought before any Court, and never sentenced. If he were, I challenge the records of that Court. I challenge the production of the summons to which he appeared, and the sentence to which he was subjected. He was brought before one of the Resident Magistrates in a police barrack in secret, a pretended trial was gone through, and the man was committed to gaol with his own connivance, the imaginary £5 bail having been put upon him so that the police might have him under their thumbs at the time they might want his evidence, he being in the meantime supported in luxury, as far as a gaol affords luxury, in the matter of food, reading, and so on. That is the case of the man Tracy. What, then, becomes of the Chief Secretary's suggestion that Preston visited him in Millbank because his bosom was the repository of the darkest secrets of Irish crime? What ground is there for the suggestion that any attempt has been made to tamper with Tracy on the part of the Irish Members? Who was to tamper with him? Was he not under the Government lock and key? Nobody can get access to a prison except Shannon and Pigott—I beg pardon—and Mr. Soames. Who was it that was tampering with Tracy? I submit we are entitled to information on that point. For my part, I never heard of Tracy until about a month ago, and then I heard this man was placed under a pretended bail of £5, in secret, in a police barrack—the law providing that such cases should not be heard except in Petty Sessions, when the ordinary magistrates are able to sit. The Government raise up a tribunal when they want one just as a jury-mast is raised on board ship, and after a pretended trial and an imaginary bail, the man, in connivance with the Government, goes to prison. This man, I presume, is really an informer. I know nothing of him, except that I believe him to be as arrant a rascal as ever breathed, who has drawn money from the *Times* and is trying to draw money from us—which he will not get, as we are not such fools as Mr. Soames. That is the story of the man Tracy, and I ask what becomes of the charge that he was being tampered with by us; and what becomes of the suggestion that he was visited by Preston for some purpose connected with the detection of Irish crime? What, then, was Head Constable Preston doing in London? He was here for months, and you will to-night be voting his salary for doing duty for the *Times.* If we could only have brought forward one case of this kind, we should have proved up to the hilt connivance between the Government and the *Times;* but instead of one we bring forward scores, and they are met by the Irish Secretary saying he knows nothing about them. It is curious how retentive the Irish Secretary's memory is on some points, and how absent it is on others. I remember the other day I asked him a question about Inspector Webb, who had been kept here three or four months. The right hon. Gentleman is able to get all sorts of information when it is intended to cast a slur on a Member of this House, the Member for North Fermanagh, whom he described as "courting under a false name." How clear the right hon. Gentleman's information was upon that point. The right Gentleman thinks these are the ways and means of getting him a reputation for candid statesmanship, and to make his rule and government popular in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman has no ambition in this House and no ambition in Ireland except a policy of exasperation. His whole demeanour in this House and his whole policy in Ireland is planned and contrived with the view to exasperation. His statements in this House and his refusals of information are all of a piece, and whenever he cannot give any explanations, his excuse is simply, "I know nothing whatever upon the subject." I ask the House to consider whether, if this was any English, or even any Indian matter, this kind of manner would be tolerated? This House a century ago impeached its Ministers in India, for wrongs done on Indian subjects, and did not think it beneath it to occupy days and days, and months and months, and years and years, in a scrutiny of the misdeeds of its subordinates in India. And when we bring forward, not, it is true, charges of theft and charges of peculation, not charges of stealing mere cash or filthy lucre, but stealing from us our good name—when we expose the mean devices by which your policy is sullied, you have nothing to say except "I do not know"; and different newspapers have no other explanation to give the constituents except that Ministers are being badgered. Poor Ministers! If Ministers do not like being badgered, they have an easy remedy. Let them dissolve. I can promise the Chief Secretary that if he takes the opinion of the country on the question of his being badgered, he will never be badgered more. If he dislikes the operation, it is wonderful how simple is the cure and the remedy. And I now, Sir, invite him to address himself with some other means than of putting forward the plea of ignorance, to the serious allegations of the Member for Newcastle; and, if he is unable to do so, I ask the House with what seriousness, with what face, with what reasonableness, can you ask us here to-night to vote the salaries of men who are implicated and "mixed up" with transactions as shady and as disgraceful as any that have stained the records of your action with the unfortunate people of the country of Ireland?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and learned Member who has just sat down appears to think that I object to what he calls being badgered—that is, having questions asked me from time to time; but he is entirely mistaken. I have always found that operation exceedingly agreeable. I do not know that I have very much to add to what I have said at all since I troubled the Committee last. Still, I think it only courteous to make some reply. The hon. Member for Northampton has moved to reduce the Vote for my salary by £500, and the chief ground for that reduction is that I am involved in this conspiracy with the *Times* and the publication of the forged letters. One piece of evidence for this is that I was responsible for allowing Pigott to make visits to a convict imprisoned for a long term for some dynamite or other crime. That question may be a very proper one to raise, but not against me, because Pigott did not visit a prisoner, directly or indirectly, in any prison under the control of the Irish Government. If anybody's salary is to be reduced for this proceeding it certainly is not mine. The hon. Member for Northampton, or some other hon. Member who spoke below the Gangway, appears to think that the Government are in some sense responsible for the escape of Pigott, because they alleged Pigott was under the charge of Irish policemen, who must have relaxed their care or he could not have escaped. That was a counter-stroke to the question I put to the hon. Member for Northampton or others, as to how it came about that if Pigott confessed on Friday evening that he was a forger and perjurer, the persons to whom he confessed took no steps to have Pigott watched or arrested? What is the value of that counter-stroke of the hon. Member for Northampton? The Irish constable of whom he spoke he appears to think had some power of legal supervision over that man. That is not the case. As I am informed, Pigott had to pass to and from the Court day by day to give his evidence, such as it was, and in order to protect him from annoyance or mobbing a request was made, I suppose by Mr. Soames, but, at any rate, by nobody connected with the Irish Government, to the subpœnaed constables that they would do what they could to prevent Pigott's being mobbed or insulted. It was in no official capacity that they did that, nor had they the slightest right of any sort, kind, or description to watch Pigott when Pigott did not want to be watched. If he ought to have been watched, it was not the Irish constables who ought to have watched him, and the question still remains unanswered, how it came about, when Pigott confessed on Friday evening that he was a forger and perjurer, that no steps were taken to put the English—not the Irish—police on his track, and take care that Pigott did not escape.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: There is the case of Shannon, in Maryport Gaol. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman——

*MR. BALFOUR: I was going to say a word about Shannon, partly in connection with the hon. Member for Northampton, and partly in connection with the remarks of the hon. and learned Gentleman. Then the hon. and learned Member asked a question with regard to Captain Slacke and Captain Plunkett—I was about to say insinuated, but it does great injustice to the style of the hon. and learned Member to say that he ever insinuates: he does not stick at the broadest assertion. He told the House that the whole of that course of issuing subpœnas to Irish magistrates and constables to give evidence was all humbug. They were wanted not to give evidence, but to come to London to supervise witnesses; and he stated, when the Irish Government protested that they were put to great inconvenience by the absence of so large a number of constables from Ireland, that they were also humbugging. I can assure the hon. and learned Member that if he had been responsible for law and order in Ireland—an extreme hypothesis—the hon. and learned Member would have found it quite as inconvenient as I did to be deprived of the services for so long a period of so large a number of Irish constables. All I can say is, that the request of the Irish Government was not only fervent, but genuine. I am informed that they were kept because, from day to day, those who had the conduct of the *Times'* case intended to call them, though I presume incidents occurred in the course of the trial which prevented them giving their evidence. The hon. and learned Member must be aware of the fact that it is not always in the power of counsel to know at what period the services of particular witnesses may be required, and it was on account of that delay, for which certainly I, whose salary it is now proposed to reduce, am not responsible, that the services of those gentlemen were so long required in London. The hon. and learned Member told me that I admitted that Alan could not be cross-examined upon the action he had taken in regard to Walsh, and said, of course, the same rule applied to Mr. Soames and other persons who might have been called. I feel some diffidence in contesting a legal point with the hon. and learned Member, because the hon. and learned Member is a lawyer and I am not, but I am given to understand that, although it would have been impossible to call Alan for that purpose, still, when Mr. Soames got into the box and offered himself for examination and cross-examination as to the method in which he got every piece of evidence laid before the Court, it would have been entirely competent for the hon. Member for Longford, or any other hon. Members engaged in the case, to have subjected Mr. Soames to the very closest cross-examination as to the methods by which he obtained the evidence which he submitted to the Court. Then, Sir, the hon. Member was very indignant about the action taken with regard to Tracy, and said he had never heard of him. That is very likely. But Tracy was a man who had been well known to the police for a long time. I do not mean to insinuate by that that he was a man who ought to have been known to the hon. Member, but what I meant to point out is, that Tracy has been engaged, as the Government know from many sources, in the commission of serious and organized crime in the West of Ireland. I repeat what I have stated before, that Tracy volunteered information in Ireland to the police on the subject of crime to which he had been a party, implicating also other persons. Soon after that he was denounced in the neighbourhood of the prison in which he was confined as an informer. Thereupon he was removed to Belfast, and the police attempted to obtain a fuller confession from him. He was removed at the suit of the *Times* to London, but it was in pursuit of the inquiry begun at the instance of Tracey himself that Head Constable Preston acted as he did. That appears to be a clear and lucid statement. As I understand, there would have been no harm in Preston's visiting Tracey on behalf of the *Times*. But, as a matter of fact, Preston did not visit him on behalf of the *Times*, or for the purpose of forwarding the *Times'* case, but for the purpose of making further investigation into the important matters with regard to which Tracy had already given partial information. I admit, of course, that the permission to make the visit was given on the application of Mr. Soames. Not only has the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary stated that in this House, but I have stated it myself also.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman tells us what Tracy was in gaol for? And for how long?

*Mr. BALFOUR: I believe he was in prison in default of finding bail in connection with a charge of intimidation and threatening life.

Dr. TANNER: The Primrose League?

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is not entitled to interrupt.

*Mr. BALFOUR: Now I come to the case of Shannon and his visit to Delaney, a matter which has been brought before the Committee both by the hon. Member for Northampton and the hon. and learned Member for North Longford. The hon. Member for Northampton has admitted that I was not responsible for Mr. Shannon's actions, since Mr. Shannon was in no way dependent on the Government, either of Ireland or England, but he appears to think that I ought to have my salary cut down £500, because when Mr. Shannon did visit this man in gaol he administered an oath to him, and behaved in a manner that did not meet with the approval of the hon. Member for Northampton. Now I do not know how far Mr. Shannon was justified in administering an oath. I believe that although it might not have been an illegal oath, it might have been improper, but it was not administered by my direction, or by a servant of the Irish Government, or even in the hearing of any servant of the Irish Government. I have not inquired into these details. I think it was stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle that the Governor ought to have been in hearing, and that therefore the Governor was responsible, but I am given to understand that it is not always necessary or usual that interviews should be in the presence of a warder in Ireland. I would remind the Committee that when application was made by the solicitor of Patrick Molloy, who was charged with perjury, for permission to see without the presence of a warder M'Caffery, Delaney, and Mullett the permission was granted by the Prisons Board, and therefore, if the precedent was bad, it at all events applies impartially both to persons who are supposed to be in the interest of the *Times* and to persons who have certainly shown that they were not in the interest of the *Times*. I would next deal with the parallel drawn by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for North Longford between the treatment he received when he desired to visit Mr. O'Brien in gaol and the treatment of Mr. Shannon when he wished to visit Delaney in the convict prison. I would remind the hon. and learned Member for North Longford that he was rather ungrateful in his allusion to this point. The prison rules, as I understand, are in England tolerably precise in this matter. A prisoner may see his solicitor or his solicitor's clerk with regard to a suit pending, but the hon. and learned Gentleman was neither a solicitor nor a solicitor's clerk.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Permission was refused to his solicitor to see him.

*MR. BALFOUR: I am speaking not from book, for I have not inquired particularly into this matter, but I think the hon. Gentleman is wholly misinformed on this point, for I have no doubt that every facility was given to Mr. O'Brien to see his solicitor or his solicitor's clerk with regard to any case pending. But that is not all. This refusal to allow any one but the solicitor or the solicitor's clerk to see Mr. O'Brien at Clonmel was relaxed when Mr. O'Brien got to Tralee in favour of the hon. and learned Gentleman himself, and I think that it is most ungrateful, when the hon. and learned Member, so far as I know, was the only counsel for a prisoner ever admitted to see that prisoner, that he should taunt the Irish Government with undue harshness in that respect.

MR. T. M. HEALY: It was only done after the attention of the Government had been directed to it by Baron Dowse.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not see how that affects the case. It is not the function of the Irish Judges to say who shall see a prisoner or who shall not. Whether rightly or wrongly, the hon. and learned Member, as far as I know, is the only counsel who has been allowed to visit an Irish prisoner in prison under the same conditions as Mr. O'Brien. I am speaking without book; it is possible, though I am not aware of it, that there might be another Member of the House equally fortunate.

An hon. MEMBER: I was visited in prison by my counsel.

DR. KENNY (Cork, S.): Mr. Carew has been visited by his counsel.

*MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I had a private interview with my counsel while I was in prison.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should like to have the particulars of these visits, because all persons in prisons have a right to be visited under certain conditions, and the question is whether those were made by the counsel as ordinary visitors or as counsel. ["As counsel."] Then I begin to fear that the ordinary prison rules in Ireland are relaxed in favour of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I was not aware of the circumstance, and I do not know that I particularly regret it. I think I have gone through the main points brought forward, and I hope——

MR. HEALY: How about the breach of Section 1 of the Crimes Act.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the hon. Gentleman must be mistaken on that matter. I have no doubt that the returns are made in strict accordance with the law. I will inquire.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I will put a question about that on the Paper.

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: By all means. I hope the Committee now begin to realize on how very flimsy foundation accusations as grave as were ever made against public men have been freely used in the country by responsible statesmen. It is bad enough that such accusations should be made, and made without any shadow of ground whatever, but that they should be made in the very same breath when those Gentlemen are complaining of the iniquity of bringing false accusations against your political opponents appears to me to add an additional tinge of darkness to a page already sufficiently dark in the history of the present Opposition.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Div.): I should not have risen had it not been for some observations of the right hon. Gentleman, from which I gather that, instead of separating himself from one of the most indecent incidents in the career of his relative the Prime Minister, he is rather anxious to follow the very mean lead which that nobleman has given to the country. The right hon. Gentleman meant his words to be understood as implying the same insinuation as the Prime Minister's—namely, that the forgery of these letters is not yet conclusively proved. I think that the bringing forward of these forged letters as a charge was infamous enough, but I describe it as more infamous, more mean, more dishonourable to persevere in the insinuations that those forged letters are genuine after the Attorney General has been compelled publicly to humiliate himself by withdrawing them, after the *Times* itself has withdrawn them, and after the Judges selected by the Attorney General—for when the hon. and learned Gentleman was asked to consult with the Front Opposition Bench on the point, he refused to do so—after the Judges themselves have described them as so palpable forgeries that it was not worth while even to add an interim report. I think the country will sufficiently judge—aye, the Government will not give the country the opportunity of judging, because, whenever the country has had the opportunity, it has given its judgment in a way you do not altogether like. I say I think the country will judge of the honour of men like the Chief Secretary and the Prime Minister, of the decency and the fair play of the Chief Secretary, who still endeavours to galvanize into life the forged letters of the suicide Pigott.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to withdraw the last phrase, which is not in order.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: What is the phrase?

The CHAIRMAN: The statement that the Chief Secretary was still endeavouring to galvanize the forged letters into life.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I was alluding to the Chief Secretary and the Prime Minister. The Chief Secretary has joined himself to the Prime Minister in galvanizing those forged letters into life.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. Member to withdraw that phrase.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: With regard to the Prime Minister, I am afraid, Mr. Courtney, I cannot withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I again call on the hon. Member to withdraw it.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I withdraw it with regard to the Chief Secretary, but with regard to the Prime Minister I cannot. I desire to draw the attention of the Chief Secretary——

The CHAIRMAN: I hope that hon. Members on both sides of the House will assist me in keeping order. I beg hon. Members on both sides below the Gangway to do so.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I wish to call the Chief Secretary's attention to the fact that he has more than once insinuated that Pigott's flight was procured by hon. Gentlemen on these benches. Does the right hon. Gentleman repudiate that suggestion? [Mr. A. J. Balfour: Certainly.] Then I want to know what the Chief Secretary meant by asking how it was that when Pigott made a confession of forgery and perjury on Friday night no means were taken to procure his arrest in England. There were two people. [An hon. Member: Labouchere.] The hon. Member below the Gangway opposite gives articulate and open expression to the covert insinuation of the Chief Secretary. Is the hon. Member below the Gangway right who says that the Member for Northampton was the person to whom the Chief Secretary pointed? Or is the Chief Secretary right, who indignantly repudiates any such suggestion? If the right hon. Gentleman did mean the Member for Northampton, he ought not to have confined himself to insinuation, but to have spoken openly. If he did not mean the hon. Member for Northampton, I am afraid he must have meant Mr. Shannon or the *Times.* But the Chief Secretary seems to be ignorant of the most elementary facts of the case. It was not on Friday that Pigott made his confession, but on Saturday; and it was made not only to the hon. Member for Northampton, but also to Mr. Shannon, one of the solicitors for the *Times.* Now anybody who read the letter of the 11th of November, in which Pigott as plainly as language could convey it said that his evidence would not bear examination, must have known that Pigott was a forger, and would prove a perjurer if put into the box. On Saturday Pigott confessed, not only to the Member for Northampton, but also to Shannon, and the difference between the two confessions was that Shannon compelled Pigott to make an affidavit with regard to his confession. Why did he want an affidavit? If he believed the confession to be true, he had only to wait till Tuesday for confirmation of Pigott's statement in the witness-box. Why, then, did he insist on an affidavit? It was because the affidavit would be used when Pigott had escaped. It is therefore perfectly clear, from this fact alone, that on the Saturday before Pigott's flight Shannon knew that Pigott intended to fly, and took good care to facilitate it. Now, the right hon. Gentleman has said that Pigott was not watched by the police. Again, the Chief Secretary is ignorant of the elementary facts. The police swore that they watched Pigott, not only in coming and going to the Court, but in the hotel, and on one occasion followed him into the streets. The most singular part of the whole transaction is, that Shannon felt himself so allied with the Government, he had the police so much under his control, that he actually ordered Irish constables to watch Pigott. That is a pretty state of things for a strictly impartial and just Government, anxious for truth and justice to prevail. They allow a whipper-snapper of a solicitor to order the Irish police about as if he were the Inspector General of the Constabulary. Then the Chief Secretary has not said a word about Inspector Horne, who was proved, by Constable Irwin, to have been in the Inns of Court Hotel superintending the witnesses—drilling, and examining, and cross-examining them, and preparing them for the Attorney General. Was Horne then under subpœna? If so, why was he not called and examined? Again, we have not a word from the Chief Secretary with regard to Walsh. The Under Secretary for India commented, with forensic indignation, on what he called the indecency of a former Solicitor General—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby—interfering with the proceedings of a judicial tribunal. Let us apply the principle to the speeches of the Government. A man called Walsh was examined, and maintained his statement that he was intimidated by a deputy inspector, called Alan, into making a certain statement. Alan was not called before the Court, and yet he had made a private communication to the Chief Secretary—made a private communication with regard to his attempt to make a witness before the Commission commit perjury; and the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit, upon that communication, to charge the witness examined before the Commission with perjury. And he made that charge, above all, against a witness who was a member of the troop of informers and scoundrels who constituted the witnesses of the Attorney General. The right hon. Gentleman has not given us an answer to our charges in regard to Shannon. He says, "I am not responsible for him." Who is responsible for what takes place in the gaols of the country? He has told us nothing about the visits to Nally and Mullett. We are informed we shall have an opportunity of eliciting all these facts from witnesses before the Commission, but how are we to get them from witnesses who are not produced? how are we to learn from these men that Shannon went into their prison cells and attempted to bribe them by promises of liberty into becoming perjurers, and, perhaps, forgers? The Chief Secretary says that the Government are simply anxious for the elucidation of the truth, and that they are libelled by the attacks on them as being the allies of the *Times*. The right hon. Gentleman said that libel is our daily bread. That was a most unkind remark for the right hon. Gentleman to make in the presence of his colleague, who has made a good deal of daily bread by publishing the forged letters of the *Times*. If the right hon. Gentleman will spare a little time from his occupation of boycotting libel literature, and from the reproduction of the forgeries of the *Times*, the reproach would come more effectually from the Treasury Bench. The Government say they stand impartial between the two sides in this case, and are only anxious for the truth. Well, if they have a witness, it was surely part of the truth to know his antecedents, so that those who are attacked by his evidence may have some opportunity of testing his credit. Supposing that this had been a criminal trial, and that the Attorney General had been prosecuting for the Government in name, as he had in this case prosecuted in reality, what would he have had to do? Badly as the hon. and learned Gentleman had acted in the whole business, I think he would have shrunk from the honourable traditions of a Crown prosecutor and not have pursued the course in a criminal case that he had adopted in this case. No Judge would have allowed him to spring on a prisoner in the dock——

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): Sir, I rise to order. I wish to know if the hon. Member is in order in what he is saying?

THE CHAIRMAN: I am reluctant to interfere with the hon. Member, but I am bound to say that the argument that he is pursuing is not relevant to the Vote before the House.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Allow me, Sir, respectfully to point out that I have been dealing with the statement of the Chief Secretary that the Government had stood impartial between the *Times* on the one side and the Irish Members on the other. But I bow to your ruling. The Chief Secretary says that the Government had acted with impartiality; but if the Irish Members had been prosecuted by the Government they would have been presented with the names of all the witnesses. Did the Chief Secretary instruct the police constables even to give them the names of the witnesses who were to be brought against them, or did they tell them that Delaney had been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for highway robbery? Were they informed as to Le Caron or the other witnesses who were to be brought against them? Not a word, not a whisper, not a syllable did they hear of those witnesses who were to give that most damaging evidence—most damaging evidence if true. I know that the distinction between truth and falsehood is not very clearly grasped by many people. The names of those people were not given to the accused, and yet the Chief Secretary calls that standing impartially between the two sides in the case. The Chief Secretary and the Government went into that business with the *Times*; they went into it to win; and they did win by it until the calumnies and forgeries were exposed. Probably some hon. Members now in this House have got into Parliament through these calumnies and forgeries. The Government have elected to stand or fall with the *Times*; and now the *Times* and its cause and its forgeries have crumbled to dust; and the *Times* will drag the Chief Secretary and the Government down with it.

The Committee divided.

While the House was being cleared for the Division, Mr. Chamberlain walked across from the front Opposition Bench to the Treasury Bench, where he entered into conversation with Mr. Ritchie. This was the signal for derisive cheering from below the Opposition Gangway. Various cries rose indistinctly above the cheers, and Mr. W. REDMOND shouted, "You are in your right place now."

THE CHAIRMAN: I have noticed repeated irregularities during the evening on the part of the hon. Member for Fermanagh, and if he persists in this conduct, I shall have to order him to withdraw.

MR. W. REDMOND: With very great respect, Sir, I ask you to point out in what respect I have been disorderly. I am totally unaware of it. I must say I think the charge most unjust.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 211; Noes 275.—(Division List, No. 37.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to move that we do now report Progress.

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: I shall not oppose the Motion. I wish to point out that we have now reached the second night of the debate, and I shall have to ask the House to-morrow to come to a decision on the Vote on Account.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Mundella*) —put, and agreed to.

Progress reported.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1888 and 1889, the sum of £131,059 14s. 2d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

1. "That it is expedient to authorize the redemption of the Consolidated Three per Cent Annuities, and the Reduced Three per Cent Annuities, and the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of the necessary amounts to pay off the principal sums payable to holders of such Stocks.
2. That the sums required for such redemption be raised by the creation of Two and Three-quarters per Cent Consolidated Stock, or by borrowing for a limited period, the principal moneys so raised and the interest thereon being charged on the Consolidated Fund.
3. That all expenses incurred in carrying out such redemption of Stock, and for providing for the payment of dividends in certain cases, as well as additional remuneration to the Banks of England and Ireland, be charged on the Consolidated Fund.
4. That provision be made for carrying out the arrangements necessary for such redemption of Stock."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: At an earlier period of the evening I said that if these Resolutions were taken to-night it would bind no one, but simply enable me to bring in a Bill which should be printed and show the measure which I shall ask the House to pass. The Committee will be aware that the amount of Consols and Reduced left outstanding after the Conversion of the National Debt had taken place amounted to about £41,250,000. Of that sum upwards of £5,000,000 are now held by Government Departments, and there is a further sum of £6,000,000 standing in the name of the Paymaster-General of the Supreme Court of Judicature, and between £1,000,000 and £2,000,000 investments in the Post Office Savings Banks. With regard to these a special arrangement will be proposed. This would leave about £29,000,000. There is in the hands of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt and other resources which will be available before the 6th of July a sum of about £6,500,000. My plan is to pay off the whole on the 6th of July, with the one exception I have mentioned, in accordance with the notice given on the 6th of July last. The task is a heavy one, but I think it is by no means beyond the resources of the Government, and it will be more convenient both for holders of Consols and for succeeding Chancellors of the Exchequer that a determined effort should be made to pay off the whole on the 6th of July, rather than proceeding by various instalments. I shall ask the Committee to be good enough to give a very free hand to the Government, so that the Government may be able, according to the price of Consols or the facilities of the money market, to carry out this operation to the greatest benefit of the State. On former occasions it was impossible to define in advance the terms on which the money could be raised. As this is a liability which has been undertaken, it is clear that considerable latitude must be given to the Government in order to raise the funds which will be necessary for paying off the amount of Consols still outstanding. I should propose that powers should be given to raise Two-and-Three-Quarters per Cent. Stock, the same as that into which Consols generally have been converted, or to raise a portion of the amount by Treasury bills or by Exchequer bonds, or by whatever means may be most available in the market at the time. The Bill will speak for itself, and when the Second Reading is taken by the House I shall, of course, be prepared to make a fuller statement than at present; but the Bill will be in the hands of Members in about two days' time, and the House will then see the full particulars. The few words I have addressed to the Committee, however, will show the general aspect of the case. I trust that, as the conversion of the 500 millions sterling has been carried out with success, and in terms not injurious to the State, though some people consider the terms were rather too hard on the holders of Consols, confidence will be shown me as the representative of the Government in carrying out the balance of this very large operation.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I wish to explain that I put down a notice of opposition to this Motion in the interest of certain trustees, and I thought the matter ought to be threshed out at the proper time—not at 25 minutes to one in the morning. It is not because of any remonstrance from Her Majesty's Government, but in consequence of a request which was addressed to me by a hon. Gentleman that I withdrew opposition on the present occasion.

*MR. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): As the proposal of the Government is one most conducive to the public convenience, I hope there will be no objection to taking the Resolution to-night.

*MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I suppose we are right in concluding that the right hon. Gentleman has control of the whole amount except £29,000,000?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: I have stated that there are in the hands of the Government £5,000,000, in the hands of the Receiver General of the Supreme Court of Judicature £6,000,000, and invested by trustees of savings banks £1,000,000 or £2,000,000. The Government have not such absolute control over these two latter sums as they have over money held by the Government Departments, and they will propose special arrangements in regard to them. The Government will be prepared to pay not only £29,000,000, but £35,000,000 if necessary, but we stand committed to pay off by the 6th of July every Consol holder who presents his Consols before then.

Resolutions agreed to.

TRUSTEE SAVINGS BANKS.

Ordered, That the Select Committee be re-appointed to inquire into and report on (1) the administration of Trustee Savings Banks under

"The Trustee Savings Banks Act, 1863"; (2) The powers, duties, and liabilities of the Trustees, Managers, and Officers of Trustees Savings Banks; (3) The relations of Trustee Savings Banks to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and other Offices or Departments of the Government, so far as these relations affect the internal management of the affairs of the said Banks; and (4) The alleged assumption by certain Trustee Savings Banks of designations calculated to mislead depositors.

That the Committee do consist of Seventeen Members—namely, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Bartley, Mr. James Campbell, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Sir John Dorington, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Brodie Hoare, Mr. Howell, Sir John Kennaway, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. David Thomas, Mr. Whitley, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Stuart-Wortley.*)

MOTIONS.

ASSIZES RELIEF BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Gully, Bill to relieve the Courts of Assize from the trial of persons charged with offences triable at Quarter Sessions, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gully, Mr. Addison, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Dugdale, Sir Matthew White Ridley, and Mr. Wharton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 167.]

FOOTPATHS AND ROADSIDE WASTES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Bill for the better protection of Footpaths and Roadside Wastes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, Mr. Bryce, and Mr. Story-Maskelyne.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 168.]

TOWN HOLDINGS.

Ordered, That the Committee on Town Holdings do consist of Twenty-five Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Amherst, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Baumann, Mr. Beadel, Mr. Biggar, Mr. Conybeare, Mr. Channing, Mr. Stormonth Darling, Mr. Thomas Ellis, Sir John Whittaker Ellis, Mr. Elton, Mr. Lewis Fry, Dr. Fox, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Heath, Mr. Knowles, Sir Henry James, Mr. Compton Lawrance, Mr. Macartney, Sir William Marriott, Mr. James Rowlands, Viscount Wolmer, and Colonel Nolan.

House adjourned at quarter before One o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 5.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [MARCH 30.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 22*nd March*, 1889.

REQUEST OF THE TURKISH AMBASSADOR FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF AN ARMENIAN JOURNAL PUBLISHED IN LONDON.

EARL GRANVILLE: I beg to ask the noble Marquess at the head of the Government whether there is any objection to state what was the object of the visit of Inspector Melville, of the Criminal Investigation Department, to the house of two Armenian gentlemen, the manager and editor of an Armenian journal; and whether such visit was paid in consequence of any communication from the Turkish Government; and, if so, what the communication was?

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: It was in consequence of a communication from the Turkish Government that my attention was aroused to this matter. The Turkish Ambassador asked us to suppress a certain Armenian journal called the *Haiasdan*. I, of course, at once answered the Turkish Ambassador that we could not suppress the journal; and therefore, so far as the Turkish Government was concerned, there the matter ended. But, as I wanted to know whether the journal was published in London or in Paris, I asked the Home Office to make inquiry, and I presume that is the reason why Inspector Melville was sent.

SALMON FISHERIES LEGISLATION.

THE EARL OF MINTO: In consequence of a paragraph I have seen in the newspapers, I beg to ask the noble Marquess at the head of the Government whether he is correctly reported as saying that there is no intention on the part of the Government to proceed with the salmon fisheries legislation; and whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce any such measure this Session?

THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN: I may say that I was as much surprised as the noble Lord upon reading the paragraph in question. I should like to correct an idea which seems to be entertained by some people, that there is at this moment any Bill before Parliament dealing with this question. There is no Bill at all on the subject at the present time before Parliament. As I stated to your Lordships last year in laying a Bill on the Table, I did so with the sole purpose of obtaining any criticisms which those interested in the matter might think fit to make, and I cannot say that I was disappointed in the result. With regard to the question of the noble Lord, I can only say that I have given no authority of any sort or kind for the statement appearing in the newspapers, nor, so far as I can learn, is that statement founded upon any letter written by anyone in authority. With regard to the latter part of the question, in the present state of business in the other House of Parliament, it is impossible for me to give any distinct statement as to whether legislation on this subject is likely to be introduced in the course of the present Session.

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS — REPORT OF AMENDMENTS.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY moved to amend Standing Order No. XLIc. so that it should read—

> "The Standing Committee shall consist in all of not more than 150 Lords," &c.;

and by Standing Order No. XLId. to provide that—

> "The quorum of the Standing Committee shall be seven."

Earl BEAUCHAMP: I would like to ask the noble Marquess if he can give us some clue as to where he proposes these Standing Committees should meet?

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I regard 40 as the magazine upon which the Committee will draw rather than the actual number of noble Lords who will at any one time attend. I do not think there will be any practical difficulty.

The Amendments were resolved upon.

The Earl of BELMORE moved to add to Standing Order XLIf. the words—

> "But in the absence from any meeting of a Standing Committee of the Chairman so appointed, the Committee shall have power to appoint another Chairman for that meeting, preference being given to a Lord (if present) who shall have been appointed to serve as a Chairman by the Committee of Selection."

The Amendment was agreed to.

Moved, "That the Standing Orders as now amended be the Standing Orders of the House relating to the conduct of public business."

Agreed to.

Ordered, That the Standing Orders be printed.

THE CORPS OF NAVAL VOLUNTEERS.

***Viscount SIDMOUTH**, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether, if it be the case that the Admiralty are dissatisfied with the present condition of the Corps of Naval Volunteers, any measure is in contemplation for promoting the efficiency of that Corps, said: My Lords, I do not know whether it will be out of order for me to quote words used in the other House of Parliament; but my question has reference to a statement made by the First Lord of the Admiralty in another place, which I cannot but regard as being made hastily and unthinkingly, and which has inflicted considerable pain upon a very gallant and deserving body of Volunteers. I am quite aware that the services of that Corps are not generally so well known as they are to myself, and as they ought to be to your Lordships. Many noble Lords have asked me who the Naval Volunteers are. The Corps has existed under adverse conditions, and with very little support, since the year 1872. It was not until 1884 that they received a capitation grant, although they had gone through a very severe training, had complied with all the requirements of the Admiralty, and had received from the officers who inspected them the most satisfactory testimonials of efficiency. There are four of these brigades round the coast. There is the London Brigade, which embraces a Corps at Hastings, and another at Brighton. There is a brigade at Bristol, which embraces two or three other western stations. A Corps has recently been formed at Liverpool, and there is one at the Clyde, both of which are under the command of noble Lords, Members of this House. The late Government refused an application from Plymouth. These Naval Volunteers have received from successive Lords of the Admiralty a good many very fine words, but very bad treatment. When the noble Lord (Lord Northbrook) was at the head of the Admiralty, he did very little to encourage the Corps, although directly he was out of office he spoke of them in the very highest terms. I will, with the permission of the House, just refer to one or two documents which bear testimony to the efficiency of the corps. The first is one which comes last in date; but it is one of the most important. The noble Marquess at the head of the Government said "that the Corps had not received the attention which it ought to receive from the Admiralty." That is reported as the answer of the noble Marquess to a question in this House by the noble Lord opposite (Earl Cowper). [The Marquess of SALISBURY: I do not recollect it.] I beg my noble Friend's pardon. The words are, "The Motion has not received the attention which it ought to have received from the Admiralty." Then Mr. Ward Hunt, when First Lord of the Admiralty, several years back, visited the Bristol Corps, and said that—

> "This was a movement that the Admiralty very much favoured, and they thought it a very important thing that every seaport town should have a number of Naval Volunteers prepared to serve in case of need."

Then, there are a number of Reports

from gallant officers who were sent down to the different ports for the purpose of inspecting the corps. Lord Charles Beresford, who is a thoroughly practical man, has spoken in the very highest terms, not only of the objects of the Corps, which he considers most important, but of the exertions, and the discipline of the corps themselves. I think it is a thousand pities that anything should proceed from high quarters calculated to discourage the corps or to lessen the zeal of men who have devoted their time and considerable sums of money to promote its efficiency. One of the complaints made by the First Lord of the Admiralty is that the corps are not proficient in their gunnery; but any deficiency of this kind that there may be is due to the fact that the Admiralty have declined to supply guns. In the few instances where guns have been supplied, the very hard condition has been imposed upon the corps of finding a permanent gun deck, which has cost the officers of the corps £50. The officer in command of the corps has charge of valuable stores, for which he is responsible, and after all the trouble and pains he has taken for many years he holds the humble position of lieutenant only. The Admiralty decline to give any higher rank; and I need hardly point out that that is one reason which very naturally renders the corps unpopular in many places where we might expect to find a large body of officers. The London corps is very highly distinguished. It is composed almost entirely of men of education and birth, who take upon themselves readily the work which is undertaken by able seamen in the Royal Navy. And, when they are taunted with not having their sea-legs, I may tell you that many of them have been on pleasure cruises as far as the coast of Normandy, and are constantly engaged in Naval pursuits about the English Coast for the purpose of promoting their efficiency as Naval Volunteers. On several occasions the corps have been exceedingly anxious to obtain permission to raise a body amongst themselves for service in Egypt and elsewhere, and have expressed their willingness to adopt any conditions that the Admiralty might choose to impose. Under all the circumstances, they feel, and naturally feel, that it is a little hard upon them that they should be spoken of in such disparaging terms by the First Lord of the Admiralty. Your Lordships will remember the coldness and disparagement with which our gallant Volunteer soldiers were spoken of when the Volunteer movement began; but now there is hardly an officer in the Army who does not recognize the Volunteers as a most powerful and efficient auxiliary force. Those Volunteers have had the advantage of advertisement, and they very naturally and properly have attracted crowds wherever they have gone, but the Naval Volunteers, living on the coast and making no display, have hitherto attracted but little notice. But now that the nation seems perfectly alive to the necessity of increasing the Naval Defences of the kingdom, it is to be hoped that the Government will give more support to the Naval Volunteers, and that the enthusiasm of a country having a much larger sea coast than that of France may be stirred up in that matter, so that we may raise an efficient, valuable, and numerous force of Naval Volunteers. I will now ask my noble Friend (Lord Elphinstone), who speaks with so much authority upon this question, from his great professional experience, the question which I have placed upon the Paper.

LORD ELPHINSTONE: I greatly regret that any words uttered by the First Lord of the Admiralty have given pain, as the noble Lord opposite seems to think they have, to the gallant corps to whom reference has been made. I am perfectly sure that in anything which the First Lord said, nothing could be further from his wish or intention than to cause them any sort of pain. The noble Lord asks me whether it is the case that the Admiralty are dissatisfied with the present condition of the corps of Naval Volunteers. The term "dissatisfied" cannot be applied to the views the Admiralty hold with regard to the present condition of that corps. On the contrary, the Admiralty fully recognize the zeal and energy displayed by that corps, and the willingness with which, at great cost and sacrifice to their time and convenience, they have come forward in order to go through their training. The difficulty which the Admiralty have with respect to the extension of the corps to other districts is the difficulty of any means of employing them. By the Act under which they are embodied, they cannot be called upon to serve away from their own ports, except in the case of apprehended invasion. Therefore, unless that contingency arises, they are not available for the only service for which the Admiralty could utilize them—namely, in supplementing the crews of ships employed round the coast. When the corps was first raised it was understood that it should be employed in vessels stationed at the various ports. But the Admiralty cannot, of course, undertake to localize the ships of the Navy to particular ports. It is essential to the proper safeguarding of our ports that the Admiralty and the admirals in command of our forces should have a free hand in the distribution or in the concentration of their ships as the exigencies of the moment required. That would be especially essential in a maritime war, and that precludes the employment of the Naval Volunteers in Her Majesty's ships when invasion is not apprehended. The local defences of the ports, whether by batteries or by sub-marine mines, are under the War Department; so the Admiralty cannot allocate to the Naval Volunteers any share in those duties. There is no analogy whatever between the Naval and the Military Services as affecting the Volunteers. The Military Volunteers are, so to speak, self-contained—that is to say, they are supplied with arms and munitions, and with instruction; but in the case of the Naval Volunteers they must not only be supplied with arms and munitions and instruction, but must also be supplied with ships, and this the Admiralty cannot undertake to do. They are prepared to supply them with guns, ammunition, and instruction. [Viscount SIDMOUTH: You could let them train.] But there is no object in training men unless there is a prospect of being able to turn that training to account, and of this the Admiralty can hold out no prospect. Short of localizing ships to individual ports, the Admiralty would gladly encourage the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers, and would be quite prepared to consider any scheme which could be devised for utilizing their services; but until some such scheme can be determined upon, the Admiralty are reluctant to add to a force which, as now composed, affords no adequate return for their cost to the country.

Lord Elphinstone

*EARL COWPER: I am sure it is the desire of all your Lordships that this corps of Naval Volunteers should, if possible, be placed in such a position that they may become a permanent and efficient part of the defensive forces of the country. As the noble Lord (Lord Elphinstone) has pointed out, the chief difficulty seems to be that the training necessary to efficiency is impossible, because the men have not the necessary ships, and the Admiralty do not see their way to provide them. I beg to ask the noble Lord whether, if the ships are provided by volunteer effort, either by hiring or constructing vessels, the Admiralty will consider the question of increasing the number of Naval Volunteers?

*THE EARL OF RAVENSWORTH: My Lords, I think the disclaimer which my noble Friend below me (Lord Elphinstone) has made will be beneficial, because the words uttered by the First Lord of the Admiralty, in another place, seem to have been misunderstood. It would be particularly unfortunate that the words of anyone—especially one in a high position—should be construed as throwing cold water upon the Naval Volunteer movement at such a time as this, when the public mind is greatly excited upon the great question of naval defence, and prepared to welcome any force that may defend our shores. There is no difficulty whatever in raising any number of men; the only difficulty is one which the Admiralty themselves have raised—namely, as to the employment of the men. It is no use raising the men unless they can be drilled. The men are anxious to raise themselves to that pitch of efficiency which is required of them, but they say that this is really a matter for the Government, and that ships should be supplied to drill them in. There is another difficulty which has arisen and which requires considering, and that is to define precisely the duties which in an emergency those men might be required to perform. If it is assumed that we held the command of the sea round our coasts, these men would have very little to do; but if we should lose at any time that command, no body of Volunteers we could raise would be sufficient to protect our ports from injury and probable loss. I understand the Admiralty, however, to say that they must have seafaring men, and I think they are right. The functions of this corps will be twofold—first, to support and assist the submarine mining corps, which are drilling with considerable alacrity at various ports; and secondly, to defend the immediate vicinity of any particular port to which they might be attached against what are called raiders. The first thing that would happen in war would be the sending of a number of light vessels fitted with guns to operate effectively against our commerce, and we ought to have a number of corresponding vessels to meet those raiders. It would be of immense importance to have, at any rate, a nucleus of such a force in each of our great ports, and the Admiralty may, I think, reasonably be pressed to afford the necessary facilities for drill. Any gunboat, though old or obsolete, would do for the purpose in time of peace, if fitted with modern guns. I have in my hand a list of the ships which are in the course of the present financial year to be removed from the Navy List, and I find there are at least ten second class gun vessels, and gun boats, which would make an excellent nucleus for the purpose. As this is a National movement, it is not right to ask the Naval Volunteers to find their own vessels, and there is no earthly reason why the Government should not spare some of the old vessels now about to be struck off the Navy List.

Lord ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, I regret that I am not in a position to commit the Admiralty by any statement as to the provision of ships for the Naval Volunteers. The difficulty is, as I said before, that we have not the money to provide ships. I think that if the large towns were to take steps to provide ships themselves, no difficulty would be raised by the Admiralty on the question of increasing the force. The noble Lord behine me (the Earl of Ravensworth) has said there are a number of obsolete ships that could be used for the purposes of the Volunteers. Now, then, is the opportunity for the Volunteers to approach the Admiralty with a view to obtaining some of those ships. The noble Lord also suggested that the Volunteers should work with the submarine miners, but I must point out that those submarine miners are under the War Office and not under our control in any way. With regard to guns, we have as far as possible supplied them, but, as I said before, the whole difficulty is with regard to the ships.

House adjourned at half-past Five o'clock to Thursday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 22*nd March*, 1889.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, IRELAND (PROFESSORS).

Return ordered—

"Showing, in the case of the Professors of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, the following particulars:—1. Date of appointment of each Professor, distinguishing those who were in office at the date of passing of the Royal University Act of 1879. 2. Official income on appointment, and in the current Session, respectively. 3. Whether the whole time of the Professor is devoted to the public service. 4. Whether a right to pension or compensation on retirement exists under the Civil Service Service Superannuation Acts, or otherwise; and whether any special terms, in respect to pension, have been made with any Professor."—(*Mr. Pinkerton.*)

COAL, CINDERS, &c.

Accounts ordered—

"Of the quantities of Coals, Cinders, and Patent Fuel shipped at the several Ports of England, Scotland, and Ireland, coastways, to other Ports of the United Kingdom, in the year 1888.

"Of the quantities and declared value of Coals, Cinders, and Patent Fuel exported from the several Ports of England, Scotland, and Ireland to Foreign Countries and the British Settlements Abroad in the year 1888, distinguishing the Countries to which the same were sent.

"Of the quantities of Coals, Cinders, and Patent Fuel exported from the United Kingdom in the year 1888.

"Of the quantities of Coals and Patent Fuel brought coastways, by inland navigation, and by railway, into the Port of London during the year 1888.

"And of the quantities of Coal and Patent Fuel received coastways at the various Ports of the United Kingdom."—(*Sir Henry Hussey Vivian.*)

QUESTIONS.

DEFECTIVE SWORDS.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a letter in the *Times* of 8th March, signed by Major-General Sir D. C. Drury-Lowe, in which, on behalf of the Special Committee of 1885, "he disclaims the responsibility now cast on that Committee for the issue of defective swords of the so-called 1885 pattern;" whether it is thereby intended to be conveyed that the defective swords were not manufactured in accordance with the Committee's pattern; and if the Committee, on whom he has placed the responsibility, is, as its Chairman states, not responsible, who is?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have seen the letter of Major-General Sir Drury-Lowe in the *Times* of March 8th; but my hon. Friend is as well able to interpret what the letter is intended to convey as I am. As he is aware, the transactions in question took place before I was connected with the War Office; but I am assured by my military advisers that the responsibility for the pattern of 1885 rests with the Committee of that date.

KNOCKADOON PIER.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention had been called to the following paragraph in the Report made by the County Surveyor to the Cork Grand Jury:—

> "I have to report that, notwithstanding the Board of Works assuring themselves that all works are sound marine structures before handing them over to the county, the pier lately constructed by them at Knockadoon has suffered severe injury, and 72 feet of the end has been carried away. . . . In this case the damage is largely due to bad concrete. A sum of about £200 will be required to rebuild this end of the pier; whether the engineer who inspected and reported upon this pier is the same officer who reported that the Ballycotton Pier was a "sound marine structure;"

and what steps the Government intend to take to secure a trustworthy Report upon such piers?

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid) also asked if it was a fact that the Knockadoon Pier, in the county of Cork, lately built by the Board of Works, Ireland, had, owing to faulty construction, recently suffered severe injury; whether it was true that 72 feet of the end of the pier has been carried away; and what sum was alleged to be now necessary in order to rebuild the pier.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.) said damage to Knockadoon Pier had occurred for a length of about 60 feet. The cement used in the construction was obtained from a respectable firm, and had undergone a better test than that prescribed. The work appeared perfectly sound in every respect when completed and transferred to the country. The failure of the cement since then is being duly investigated with the manufacturers, and is due, as far as can be judged, to some hitherto unexplained chemical action, similar to that in the case of the Aberdeen and other harbours. The board's officer in the matter was the same Gentleman who reported on the Ballycotton Pier. The Board of Works intended under the peculiar circumstances, to propose to carry out, with the assent of the Grand Jury, the repairs out of the Fisheries Piers and Harbour Fund.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

MR. LANE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty what were the actual prices in the tenders submitted to the Admiralty by the Danish and Irish firms for the supply of mess pork; whether he is aware that the Irish contractors assert that they can supply better quality than the Danish; whether he is aware that the Danish Government have for many years past, through their Agricultural Department, spent large sums of money in promoting the improvement of the breeds of native hogs and of the methods of curing and packing; and, whether, under those circumstances, he will consider the expediency of giving the contract for supplying the British Navy to firms in the United Kingdom rather than to a Danish firm?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON) (Middlesex, Ealing): It is inexpedient, both in the interests of the Government and of contractors themselves, to name the actual prices quoted in the tenders for Government supplies, but I have no objection to stating that there was an average difference of 9½ per cent in favour of Danish as against Irish prices in the last tenders for salt pork. There is no reason to suppose that Irish pork is of better quality than Danish, and lengthened experience shows great equality in this respect. There is no information at the Admiralty relating to the reported action of the Danish Government in promoting improvement in the breed of native hogs, or of methods of curing and packing. I am desirous, within reasonable limits, to favour home production for Government supplies, but I cannot undertake to reject tenders from abroad when it is manifestly in the public interest to accept them.

MEDICALLY TRAINED SCHOOL INSPECTORS.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether it is his intention to direct that school inspectors should in future be medically trained, so as to enable them to fulfil their new duties of detecting defects of vision in young children; and, if their Reports show that short sight is on the increase, what steps the Department will take to check the progress of an infirmity which must seriously hamper the future usefulness of our industrial population?

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): It was not included in my promise the other day that none but trained oculists should in future be employed as inspectors; but when we have collected reliable information on the subject, care will be taken to acquaint the House with the steps it is proposed to take.

DR. FARQUHARSON: The matter is really one of national importance. Will the Government consider the propriety of appointing a small Departmental Committee to inquire into it?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I fully admit the importance of the matter, and the inspectors will devote very careful consideration to it.

DR. FARQUHARSON: But the inspectors are not medical men.

IRELAND—POOR LAW ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention had been drawn to the case of Andrew McBride, who left Ireland when 14 years of age, and spent 48 years in Scotland, but who now under a removal warrant has become a charge with his wife upon the rates of the Magherafelt Union; and if the Government can take any steps to remedy the hardship of such cases to Irish ratepayers?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) said the question had reference to a somewhat ancient grievance in regard to Poor Law arrangements in Ireland. He was afraid it was not in his power to give any pledge in regard to legislation on the subject, but he was satisfied there were defects in the law.

THE TROCADERO.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he was aware that a song entitled "Home Rule," which was sung at the "Trocadero" during the first five days of last week, was prohibited on St. Patrick's Eve; and if such prohibition was instigated by the police?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed that a song called "Home Rule" sung at the Trocadero was discontinued by order of the manager. The police had nothing whatever to do with the matter.

POLICE VISITS IN IRELAND.

MR. BLANE asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state the reason why a body of Constabulary, armed with rifles and bayonets, made a raid in the night on the house of John Harkins, of Middletown, county Donegal, burst in the doors, and turned the inmates out of bed; and if other houses in the district were dealt with in a similar way?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary Authorities report that it is the case that a few nights ago the house of Harkins and other houses were visited by the police in their search for certain persons charged with complicity in the murder of District Inspector Martin, who are still in hiding. No doors were burst open and no inmates were turned out of bed. The police did not succeed in making any arrests.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): Did the police act with or without warrant?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I cannot answer that question.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I have a question upon the paper on the same subject. Is it true that every house was searched between Middletown and Dunleevy, a distance of nine miles?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I rather think it is true.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside) asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education what was the present position of the Christ's Hospital Scheme, and whether there was any prospect of its being laid upon the Table in time to permit of its becoming law this year; and, whether, having regard to the fact that 3,000 children have already been deprived of a three years' course of secondary education, he will exert himself to put an end to these prejudicial delays?

SIR W. HART DYKE: According to the information given me, the objections to the Christ's Hospital Scheme will probably be heard by the Judicial Committee before the Whitsuntide holidays, in which case there might be time for the scheme, if sustained, to become law this Session. The right hon. Gentleman must be aware that since the Scheme was approved by the Education Department I have had no power to influence its progress.

INDIAN COVENANTED CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in the List of the Indian Covenanted Civil Service, published in January 1886, an alteration was made in the arrangement of the names of members of that service, and the names of all statutory civilians for the first time shown in a separate list; whether the following heading was placed over this separate list, "Statutory Civilians, who, though not members of the Covenanted Civil Service, hold appointments reserved ordinarily for that service;" whether he will state why these changes have been made, and what were the circumstances under which it was then determined that the statutory civilians were "not members of the Covenanted Civil Service," although for five years they had been so classified and so regarded; whether the statutory civilians have been informed of the change; and, if yes, in what manner; whether the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown was obtained before the alteration was made and the "heading" adopted; and whether he will lay upon the Table of this House the Papers explaining and justifying the above alteration?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA** (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The alteration referred to was made in the Bengal Civil List—not in the other provinces of India. The new description appears to be more accurate, and in accordance with the Act of Parliament. It was a recurrence to the more correct practice which at first obtained. The Statutory Civilians were not informed of the change, nor was the opinion of the Law Officers obtained. The Secretary of State cannot lay any Papers on the Table which will afford any further explanation or justification.

IRELAND.—POLICE AT GWEEDORE.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state why, in addition to the Police and Military, a staff of detectives from Belfast are stationed in the district of Gweedore; and under what authority did these detectives last Friday, accompanied by two Gweedore constables, make a house to house visit in the townlands of Magheralisk and Knockstaller, note book in hand, and inquire of the head of each house whether he was at chapel on Sunday, 3rd February, and question the inhabitants as to their whereabouts and their associates on that day?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The constabulary authorities report that they are taking such steps as they consider necessary to make all the persons implicated in the murder of District Inspector Martin amenable. The questions now being asked in this House are calculated to embarrass them in that direction. But when the case has been decided by a Court of Law they will be prepared to give every information which may be reasonably required.

SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): At what hour of the night did these visits take place?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot answer the question without notice.

MR. MAC NEILL: Under what authority, Common or Statute Law, have these detectives from Belfast been ordered to cross examine and Star Chamber the people?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

ALLEGED PERJURY IN WALES.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to the remarks of Mr. Justice Grantham, at Cardiff, as to the alleged prevalence of perjury and forgery in Wales; whether the number of cases of perjury, forgery, and uttering forged documents (so far as known to the police) in the police districts of Wales and Monmouthshire, compared with those in England, in the year ending 25th September 1887, the last year for which statistics are available, were as 4·1 to 100, and for the five years ending the same date as 5·8 to 100; whether all the crimes committed (not summarily disposed of, and so far as known to the police) in the same districts for the five years ending 25th September 1887 were as 3·8 to 100; whether the population of Wales and Monmouthshire was at the last Census over six per cent of that of England; and, if he can lay upon the Table *data* upon which the House might form an opinion on the facts of the case?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have not seen the remarks of the learned Judge. The figures cited by the hon. Member are accurate. These statistical *data* are accessible to the House and to the public in the judicial and other statistics, and an opinion can be formed upon them. I know of no other or better *data* which I could usefully lay upon the Table of the House.

MR. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will take steps, by Return or otherwise, to bring to the notice of the Judges that these crimes are not more rife in Wales than in England. Is he aware that the charge of forgery was brought against the Welsh people some time ago, and that it was exactly the same charge as that which has recently been made by Mr. Justice Grantham?

MR. MATTHEWS: I believe that the two cases are identical.

MR. T. ELLIS: As this sweeping charge has been brought against the people of the Principality, I wish to ask whether a single case of perjury or forgery was tried in the whole of North Wales in the recent Winter Assize?

MR. MATTHEWS: I will inquire, and inform the hon. Member.

RAILWAY RATES.

In reply to Mr. MACLURE,

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Yes; Sir. The Board of Trade have fixed £50 as the fee to be paid by every Railway Company depositing a revised classification of merchandize and schedule of maximum rates. The fee is fixed by Rules made by the Board of Trade under the provisions of section 35 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, and the money will be applied as an appropriation in aid of the expenses arising upon the settlement of the classifications and schedules. I have already dispensed with part of the fee in certain cases, and I will carefully consider any application coming from a company who are *bonâ fide* unable to pay without detriment to their creditors. But it must be remembered that the labour and expense of settling a schedule does not vary with the size of the company, and that £50 is not an unreasonable sum to ask from any solvent company for the work performed.

INSPECTOR OF CLOTHING.

MR. HANBURY asked the Secretary of State for War whether the Inspector of Clothing has resigned, and the post is to be filled up; and, if so, whether care will be taken that no one connected with firms contracting with the Department shall be appointed to this responsible post?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The Inspector of Cloth has resigned, and it will be necessary to replace him. We are examining very closely the qualifications of the 188 candidates for this post, and care will be taken not to appoint anyone connected with firms contracting with the Department.

MAJOR GENERAL DOWNES.

SIR HORACE DAVEY (Stockton) asked the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the case of Major General Downes, Royal Artillery, who was appointed last year Commandant of the Forces by the Government of South Australia;

whether, notwithstanding the strong representations of the Colonial Government, he has refused his consent to Major General Downes' appointment, with the result that he can only hold it on condition of permanently losing his pension; whether he is aware that his decision has given great dissatisfaction in the Colony; what is the reason for the decision; and whether he will lay the correspondence with the Government of South Australia upon the Table of the House?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: Honorary Major General Downes has been refused permission to draw his retired pay, so long as he shall hold the appointment of Commandant of the Forces of South Australia; but no question of its permanent withdrawal has arisen; my decision has been given on military grounds, in which the interests of the Colony are directly concerned. An arrangement was made in 1886 in consultation with the Agents General of the Colonies, including South Australia, that Her Majesty's Government would provide competent officers on the Active List to hold, for the usual period of staff appointments, certain Colonial positions of a military character. Her Majesty's Government and the Colonies considered it very important that the Colonial Forces and those of Her Majesty's Army should be kept in close touch, which could only be effected by having officers to command them who should be fully acquainted with all the latest developments in drill, tactics, armament, &c., which have obtained with the Imperial troops. With that view, we undertook that the Colonial Service of such effective officers should count for promotion and Imperial pension as if it were Imperial Service, provided the Colonies would issue the full pay during employment. If retired officers should be appointed to these posts and be allowed to hold them for an indefinite period, the whole object of the arrangement would be sacrificed; and, consequently, I am not prepared to sanction Major General Downes drawing his retired pay. The regulations on the subject were presented to this House in September 1887; and I do not think there is anything in the correspondence which would affect the question of the hon. Member.

Sir Horace Davey

THE CORK GRAND JURY.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether his attention has been called to a resolution reported in the Cork papers as having been unanimously passed by the City Grand Jury, protesting against

> "the injudicious use which the Crown has made of its power under the Criminal Law and Procedure Act, in summoning three hundred jurors of the city and county for the trial of three cases of no conspicuous importance;"

and to the following remarks of Baron Dowse thereupon, who said,

> "For the trial of only one case! It is a monstrous proceeding, and I will receive your protest. The idea of summoning three hundred jurors to try one case! The weight of that is upon Mr. Hennessy's head. I will receive the protest, and hand it to the Crown Solicitor;"

who is responsible for the proceedings so strongly condemned by the learned Judge; and will any steps be taken to relieve the jurors of Cork from the severe strain of frequent attendance in large numbers, of which they have often to complain?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, Dublin University): My attention has been called to this matter by the question of the hon. Member. The Grand Jury is reported to have passed the resolution, and the Judge to have used the language referred to in the question. The resolution of the Grand Jury as reported is founded upon error, as the Special Jury was not summoned from the County of Cork as well as the City. The Jury was summoned from the City alone, pursuant to the Order in Council, and under this Order 300 jurors, or the entire panel if it does not exceed 300, must be summoned. The inconvenience to them and to common jurors summoned from the same venue is identical. As regards the cases for trial, one of them, at all events, cannot fairly be described as of no conspicuous importance, for the prisoners were charged with being two of a gang of men who broke into a house by night and shot the proprietor in the legs, in the presence of his wife and child. The case was tried twice in the City of Cork before the Chief Baron by a common jury, who, on both occasions, disagreed. The Chief Baron on the occasion of the last disagreement refused to admit the prisoners to bail, and the Attorney General, who is exclusively responsible for having a Special Jury ordered, having regard to the gravity of the case, and to the fact of two disagreements by common juries, decided that an order should be obtained to have the case tried by a Special Jury. As regards the last paragraph, the Attorney General will exercise the greatest care in endeavouring to relieve the common jurors of the City of Cork. The special jurors to whom the question relates have had comparatively very few cases to try.

MR. LANE: May I ask if the Government have received a Memorial from the Grand Jury of the County of Cork protesting against the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the jury; and what action is intended to be taken?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member must give notice of the question.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): The Solicitor General did not answer the second paragraph of the question of my hon. Friend—namely, who is responsible for the proceedings condemned by Baron Dowse?

MR. MADDEN: The Attorney General is responsible for having the case tried by a Special Jury.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Is it not the fact that in Wicklow the Grand Jury passed a similar resolution?

MR. MADDEN: As long as the Order in Council is in force it is imperative that it should be obeyed.

MR. LANE: Now, if 300 jurors were summoned in the ordinary course, can the Solicitor General account for the learned Judge having spoken of the proceeding as a monstrous one?

MR. MADDEN: The remark of the learned Judge had no reference to the number of jurors. If it did, he must have spoken in ignorance of the circumstances.

MR. SEXTON: Was the statement of Baron Dowse brought to the notice of the Privy Council?

MR. MADDEN: I cannot answer that question.

SHANNON DRAINAGE BILL.

MR. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, assuming it to be his intention to re-introduce the Shannon Drainage Bill this Session, if he proposed to borrow a sum of £65,000 on the security of the tolls and eel fisheries of said river; if he is aware that the Government title to those eel weirs is at present a matter of contention before the Superior Courts of Law in Ireland; if complaints have been made to the Irish Government of serious destruction of fry and trout by eel weirs between Killaloe and Limerick; and if any steps will be taken to prevent such injuries?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Shannon Drainage Bill proposes to raise £65,000, on the security of navigation tolls and rents of mills, lands, and eel fisheries. The question of title to the eel weirs does not form part of the suit alluded to, though damages are sought on the grounds of enlargements or enhancement of the eel weirs. Complaints, as stated in the question, were made, but are considered wholly groundless, as the eel fishing is only carried on at periods when the fish are not migrating towards the sea.

VALUER TO THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it was true that the chief valuer attached to the Irish Land Commission was in receipt of £1,000 a-year for said office; whether he is a pensioner of Greenwich Hospital; whether he is in receipt of £300 a-year pension from that institution; and, what are his qualifications for the discharge of the important duties of chief valuer to the Irish Land Commission?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners inform me that the facts are as stated in the first three paragraphs. The gentleman in question was for many years general estate manager for Greenwich Hospital at a salary of £1,400 a-year, and has many years' experience in valuing land.

MR. BRYNE: Has this officer any qualification whatever? Does he know anything about the valuation of land?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot express an opinion upon that point.

FAIR RENTS.

MR. BRYNE asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is true that a large number of leaseholders in the Rathdrum Union, county Wicklow, served originating notices to have fair rents fixed prior to the 29th September, 1887; whether these cases are yet unheard; whether decrees for the old rents are got against the tenants one month after each gale becomes due; whether the coming gale, due 25th March instant, will be two years' rent since some of the notices were duly served; whether he will urge the Land Commission to hold sittings more frequently, and avoid the grievous losses, delays, and inconvenience to which tenants are subjected; and, if he can say when the next Court will sit in that Union?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners inform me that there are now 136 cases remaining unheard in the Union of Rathdrum in respect of which originating notices were received prior to the 29th of September, 1887. At the last sitting in that union 134 cases were disposed of. Assuming that in some of the first-mentioned cases no rent had been paid since the originating notices were served, two years' rent will apparently have since accrued at the 25th inst. I have no information as to whether proceedings have been taken for the old rent in the cases in question, but it is to be remembered that the judicial rent when fixed will be retrospective, and an account had between the parties in cases where the actual payments made for rent since accruing shall exceed, or are less than, such judicial rents, and it is further competent for the tenant to apply to the County Court Judge for a stay of execution and for an Order from him should he see fit that the arrears shall be spread over a given period for payment by instalments. It is probable there will be another sitting for this union in May or June next.

JAMAICA—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

Sir GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any further decision had been come to in regard to the proposed sale of the Jamaica Government Railways to an American Syndicate, payment to be in shares of a Company to be incorporated in New York; whether such shares will hold a prior lien on the Railway over all bonds and other charges; and whether, with a view to the extension of the Railway system in Jamaica, offers for the purchase of the existing Railways, and their extension, will be entertained if made by English capitalists?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, Toxteth): The Secretary of State has not yet decided whether the Government of Jamaica should be authorized to recommend to the Legislature the proposal which has been made. If it is carried out the Company will be incorporated not in New York, but in Jamaica, under a special Act. It is proposed that the payment for the existing railway shall be made partly in cash and partly in second mortgage bonds; and that the Government shall have the right to resume the railways if they are not efficiently worked, though its bonds will rank after the first mortgage bonds. It is understood that the capital will be principally raised in England. A provisional agreement was made in the Colony in November last, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, and confirmation by the Legislative Council. Though there is nothing to prevent other offers being made to the Government of Jamaica, they could hardly be entertained by that Government until a decision has been arrived at upon the agreement.

THE "CARLOW SENTINEL."

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, inasmuch as the proprietor of the *Carlow Nationalist and Leinster Times* has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment in default of entering into recognizances to be of good behaviour for publishing a *bonâ fide* report of a meeting of the National League at Luggacurren, the Government will direct a prosecution of the *Carlow Sentinel*, a Tory newspaper, for publishing in February 1888 a letter attacking the Leighlinbridge Branch of the National League for not boycotting an alleged land grabber in the district, and in particular attacking the president, Rev. J. E. Delaney, C.C.?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: This question having been brought before the Attorney General for Ireland, he has called for a copy of the newspaper mentioned and for a Report as to the circumstances.

LO BENGULA.

MR. ALEXANDER M'ARTHUR (Leicester) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state to the House what reply Her Majesty's Government intend to give the Chief Lo Bengula, who has just sent Envoys to this country to ask for protection against foreign invasion and for advice about white men who come to his country to dig for gold; and is it intended to send the reply by the hand of a duly accredited representative of the Imperial Government?

BARON H. DE WORMS: It would not be showing due consideration to Lo Bengula if Her Majesty's Government were to publish the reply about to be given to him many weeks before it can reach him, and any inaccurate summary of it, if telegraphed out, might cause serious misunderstanding. The reply, however, will be friendly, and will contain the recommendation mentioned in the answer which I gave to the hon. Gentleman on the 15th inst. It is not proposed to send the reply by the hands of a special messenger from home.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the notes of the private inquiry held by the present County Court Judge Curran in reference to the Phœnix Park murders were furnished to agents of the *Times;* and, if so, by whom?

***MR. A. J. BALFOUR**: The notes mentioned were neither furnished to, nor in any way seen by, the agents of the *Times.*

MR. J. MORLEY: In whose hands are these documents kept?

***MR. A. J. BALFOUR**: I cannot answer the question off-hand, but I suppose they are in the Castle.

MR. CHANCE: Can neither a copy, nor an extract, nor a *précis* be given?

***MR. A. J. BALFOUR**: That is the information supplied to me.

AFFAIRS AT TANGIER.

SIR R. FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to state the nature of the British claims which a portion of the Mediterranean Squadron has been sent to Tangier to enforce; whether the Sultan of Morocco has ever sanctioned the telegraphic cable between Tangier and Europe, injury to which is alleged to be a ground of complaint, or has made himself in any way responsible for its maintenance; whether Cape Juby, where injuries are said to have been done to certain traders, for which it is also alleged that reparation is now sought, is within the authority of the Sultan of Morocco; and whether Her Majesty's Government is aware that demands for compensation, on account of misconduct by tribes over which the Sultan of Morocco has no real control, are likely to lead to extortionate demands and violent reprisals, seriously imperilling the interests of the natives?

***THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): There are obvious reasons why I cannot state particularly the claims which Her Majesty's Government make upon the Government of Morocco. The sanction of the Sultan to the telegraphic cable was communicated by the Moorish Commissioner for Foreign Affairs to Her Majesty's Minister. It is true that he afterwards attempted to withdraw it; but Her Majesty's Government do not admit his right to do so. Her Majesty's Government have never admitted the sovereignty of the Sultan over Cape Juby; but he, on the contrary, claims to exercise authority there, and it was by an armed force of his soldiers that the European servants of an English company were treacherously set upon, and one of them killed and two wounded. Her Majesty's Government will not make demands which are liable to lead to extortion or injustice.

BRITISH AGENCY AT ZANZIBAR.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is true that Colonel Euan Smith, the Consul General at Zanzibar, is coming home on leave; whether it is at the instance of the Government that he is coming to England; and, who is to look after the interests of British subjects at Zanzibar during his absence?

***SIR JAMES FERGUSSON**: Colonel Euan Smith has been directed to come home in order to confer with Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Portal, a diplomatic officer of proved ability, will proceed to Zanzibar to take charge of the Agency during his absence.

SUGAR BOUNTIES CONVENTION.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any of the following countries—numely, the United States, France, Brazil, Austria, and Belgium—have, since the signing of the Sugar Bounties Convention, signified their intention of abandoning their several attitudes of indifference or reserve, or of adhering to the Convention unconditionally; and, if he can state how many, and which countries have given their final adhesion to the Convention so as to be now committed to it unreservedly, subject only to formal ratification?

*__Sir JAMES FERGUSSON__: Austria and Belgium have announced their intention to take part in the Commission to consider the laws in connection with the Convention of August 30, 1888, which, in pursuance of the declaration of that date, will meet on the 1st of May next. The Powers signatory to the Convention are proceeding with the measures necessary to give effect to it. Information with respect to the final attitude of Powers which did not sign the Convention on the 30th of August cannot yet be given.

MR. ANDERSON AND THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Mr. R. Anderson submitted the letter signed by him, and published in the *Times* on the 21st instant, to the Secretary of State, and obtained his permission to publish it; what position Mr. Anderson occupied in the Civil Service when he joined it, and what was his official salary; whether he fulfilled the duties of this office whilst employed as a detective of the Home Office; whether there are any other instances of Civil servants receiving a public salary for specific services in a public department and being employed as detectives without the knowledge of the head of the department, and receiving a secret salary; whether Mr. Anderson was handed over by the Secretary of State for the Home Department the moneys which were paid to Beach for his communications; and whether the doctrine laid down by Mr. Anderson, in his letter of 21st March, that communications paid for by the taxpayer, and received by a person receiving a salary on account of their receipt, are the property of the writer or of the person to whom they are addressed if they are kept at the private residence of the latter and not "filed" in a Government Office?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first paragraph is in the negative. Mr. Anderson joined the Civil Service as Secretary to the Prisons Commission, at a salary of £600 a-year, and fulfilled the duties of that office continuously until he was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in September last. With regard to the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the hon. Member's question, it would be contrary to my duty to give the hon. Member in the House of Commons any information as to the manner in which, or the persons to whom, secret service money has been dispensed by my predecessors or by myself beyond this—that the rules laid down by the Treasury Minutes (April 19 1886, and April 12 1888) on that subject have been and will be observed by me. As to the last paragraph, the doctrine stated in that paragraph does not appear to me to represent accurately the effect of Mr. Anderson's letter of the 21st of March, nor am I prepared to lay down any general rule applicable to all secret service documents.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Allow me to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in view of the fact that he blamed Sir C. Warren, the late Chief Commissioner of Police, for publishing in the newspapers his views upon matters in general connected with his office, he will inflict some sort of blame upon this gentleman for publishing this letter?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I shall deal with the matter with a due sense of my own responsibility in relation to the great office which I hold; but I am not prepared at present to state what course I shall take.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it was by his sanction that Mr. Anderson, as stated in his letter yesterday, furnished Mr. Macdonald, of the *Times*, with the name of a confidential person to support the *Times* in what is called the American branch of the case; and, if not, on whose authority did Mr. Anderson proceed? I wish also to ask whether Inspector Andrews, whom he admits to have been sent out to America since the Act forming the Commission was passed, was the confidential person who helped the *Times* with the American part of the case at the suggestion of Mr. Anderson?

MR. MATTHEWS: The question with respect to Mr. Andrews does not in any way arise out of the question on the Paper. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put it down. With regard to the first part of the question, my answer is in the negative.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I should like to ask whether it was regular on the part of Mr. Anderson to give a private individual—Mr. Macdonald, of the *Times* —secret assistance with regard to the American branch of the *Times'* case, which knowledge must have come confidentially to Mr. Anderson?

MR. MATTHEWS. When the hon. Gentleman asks me whether it was regular, I presume he means to ask me whether it was contrary to any rule of the Civil Service. I am not aware that any rule has been broken.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Are we to understand that it is at the option of the Civil Servants to supply private litigants with such secret or confidential information as may be in their hands, and which has come to them as Government officials from persons who were in receipt of State pay?

MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member is not to understand that.

MR. BRADLAUGH: In consequence of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, and of the evidence of Le Caron, I beg to give notice that on the Secret Service Vote I shall draw attention to the facts of the case, and move the rejection of the Vote.

MR. GILL (Louth, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say at what date Mr. Anderson joined the Civil Service?

MR. MATTHEWS: That is not in the question.

NAVAL EXPENDITURE.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it was the fact that the money expended upon armaments and new construction in the year 1888-89, as set forth on pages 102 and 159 of the Navy Estimates, 1889-90, if continued for five years, would have amounted to £22,748,250, or, in other words, would have exceeded the estimated expenditure under the new programme by about one million and a quarter?

MR. R. W. DUFF (Banff) asked whether the Return moved for by the noble Lord would be in the hands of Members before the Navy Votes were proceeded with?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, Ormskirk): In answer to the last question, I may say that I hope the Return will be in the hands of Members on Monday, or, at the latest, on Tuesday next. My noble Friend has in his question fallen into an error similar to the one where he assumed that the whole of the Shipbuilding Vote was available for new construction alone. He asks me if the amounts provided under the Ordnance Vote of 1888-89—namely, £1,863,500 (which, I think, is the highest figure ever reached) would, if added to the expenditure of that year on new construction—namely, £2,686,150, produce in five years the sum of £22,748,250, or one million and a quarter in excess of the total estimated cost of the new programme. As an arithmetical calculation his figures are correct, but his deductions are erroneous. The new programme of shipbuilding and its armament only absorbs a portion of the provision that has to be made under the Shipbuilding and Ordnance Votes during the next five years. The ships now building and completing have also to be finished at an estimated cost of £1,500,000, excluding cost of armament. This is quite independent of the new programme. The new programme will gradually come to a conclusion during the years 1893-94, and provision is proposed to be made of a sum of £3,000,000 available for new ships to be then commenced. Adding the sums together, we have a sum of £4,500,000 over and above the cost of the construction of the ships in the new programme. The Ordnance Vote stands at £1,463,000, and, multiplying this by five, we have a figure of £7,317,500 available during the next five years. Of this sum only £2,850,000 is required for the armament of ships in the new programme, leaving a balance of £4,467,500 which is necessary to complete the armament of these ships now building, to provide the ordinary requirements of the Fleet, and to meet the large arrears of past years in stores and guns. Adding to the £21,500,000, which is the cost of the new programme, the sums I have named —viz., £4,500,000 and £4,467,500, we have to provide for a total approximate outlay of 30 millions and a-half in new construction and under the Ordnance Vote during the next five years.

Lord C. BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.): May I ask my hon. Friend whether I am correct in stating that the actual net increase of the Shipbuilding Vote, over and above what is called the waste, which the First Lord of the Admiralty put down as £1,800,000 in the statement of 1877, the actual increase proposed at this moment, taking the armaments out of it, is £9,635,000 for the next five years?

Mr. FORWOOD: I must ask for notice of the question. I think the information is included in the Return moved for by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: When I have thoroughly mastered the answer which the Secretary to the Admiralty has given I shall put a further question. I beg now to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can explain the difference between the figures of expenditure on new programme and ships in progress shown in his Memorandum of 8th March, and the figures of expenditure on new programme and ships in progress shown on page 159 of the Navy Estimates of this year, and which of the documents is authentic and accurate?

Mr. FORWOOD: Both statements are correct. The one in the Memorandum refers to money to be voted, and the other to the value of stores and labour to be expended. The difference between the amounts estimated as required to complete ships in progress as shown in the Estimates (page 159) and that given in the Memorandum of 8th March, arises from payments being included on account of gun mountings and fittings, &c., which will not be completed in 1889-90, and therefore cannot appear in the expense accounts to the debit of the ships as expenditure in that year, provision for which has, however, to be made under Vote 8 in 1889-90. The amount shown on the Memorandum for new construction in the Dockyards—viz., £2,650,000, is the maximum amount of expenditure proposed to be allowed in the Bill which my noble Friend hopes to be allowed to introduce in the course of a few days.

THE ROYAL MARINES.

Lord R. CHURCHILL asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he would lay upon the Table copies of Colonel Crease's scheme for re-organizing the Royal Marines, and of all Reports and Papers on the subject?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The scheme in question is one suggested by an officer, when in a subordinate position, upon the re-organization of his own corps. I do not think it would be advisable to make documents of this character Parliamentary Papers. If the Commission specially appointed to inquire into the organization and administration of the Army and Navy, and of which the noble Lord is a Member, desire this scheme and the papers attached to it, I will at once produce it.

THE PRISON TREATMENT OF MR. W O'BRIEN.

Mr. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether the inquiry into the prison treatment of Mr. William O'Brien was to be held by a member of the Prisons Board or an inspector; whether Mr. O'Brien might be represented by counsel; whether he would be present during the examination of witnesses, and whether the witnesses might be examined by him or his counsel; whether persons interested might be present at the inquiry; whether the visiting justices and chaplains who could give evidence would be summoned; whether every witness would be sworn; whether the evidence would be taken down by a sworn shorthand writer; and how soon he expected to lay a copy of the evidence upon the Table?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: In accordance with the usual practice, the inquiry is being held by an inspector, and without the presence of counsel. The inquiry is not into any accusations made against Mr. O'Brien, and he has, therefore, no right to be present during the examination of other witnesses or to cross-examine them. Mr. O'Brien will be afforded full opportunity for giving his own testimony. All persons, who it is believed can give material evidence, will be called, and all witnesses will be sworn. In accordance with the invariable practice the evidence is taken down in longhand, and each witness's deposition is signed by him after he has heard it read. The result will be laid on the Table as soon as possible after the close of the inquiry.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Who will cross-examine the witnesses?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The inspector who carries out the investigation.

MR. SEXTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in Dundalk Gaol, in 1881, when suspects were imprisoned under Mr. Forster's Act, an inquiry was held respecting the officials; that then prisoners were allowed to be present during the examination of the officials and to cross-examine the officials, although no accusation was made against the prisoners—they were the accusers; whether that precedent would be followed on the present occasion, and, if not, why not; also, whether Mr. O'Brien has agreed to be examined; and whether the Mayor of Clonmel and others who may tender themselves to be examined will be examined?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If any person can show that he is able to give material evidence, I should say that he will be examined. But I understand that the Mayor of Clonmel derived his information from Mr. O'Brien, and therefore it might not be necessary for him to be examined in addition to Mr. O'Brien. With regard to the precedent, I never heard of it; but it is obvious that it is not on all fours with this case, for it would appear that the prisoners then made accusations against the prison officials, and no accusation has been made by Mr. O'Brien.

MR. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman forgets that Mr. O'Brien has made charges against the prison doctor who met him on his entrance into prison, and against the warders who assaulted him.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: This investigation was not instituted on the request and complaint of Mr. O'Brien. With regard to the precedent quoted, I will inquire, but I am told there is no such.

MR. COX (Clare, E.): I was one of the prisoners in 1881, and I was examined and was present at the examination of the officials, and cross-examined the warders.

MR. T. M. HEALY: If this is not a case of complaint against the prison officials, what is it?

***MR. SPEAKER**: Order, order!

MILITARY PENSIONS AND PROMOTION.

MR. HANBURY (Preston) asked the Secretary of State for War whether a Major General, who was selected for the command of a district early in 1887, went to the expense of fitting out for the command, and actually held the appointment for one year, but was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General before he had held the command for the full qualifying period of two years, will be allowed to count in any way the period of such employment, or whether he will be held to have been unemployed for the whole period of five years ending 31st March, 1889, and will thereupon be compulsorily retired; whether the officer in question ran through the grade of Major General in about three and a-half years, the usual period being nine and a-half years, and it was consequently almost impossible for him to be employed for the full qualifying period in a Major General's appointment; whether, besides the addition of another General in the prime of life to the Pension List at an annual future extra cost of £810, his retirement will also tend to the longer retention by its present holder, at its present salary, of an office for which his successor is to receive £500 a-year less than is now paid; and, whether, in view of an annual saving of over £1,300, and the fact that the officer in question was actually employed as described, and has been further recommended for employment, he will exercise any of the powers conferred upon him by Paragraph 95 of the Royal Warrant, and in so special a case help to keep down the overgrown Pension List of Officers?

***MR. STANHOPE**: I presume that my hon. Friend refers to the case of Lieutenant General Tupper. If so, I can only say that that officer accepted the command at Woolwich with the full knowledge that he would probably be promoted to Lieutenant General in a few months, and that on such promotion he would have to vacate the appointment.

The limit of two years as a bar to the non-employment rule for retirement was deliberately adopted; and I am not prepared to recommend a departure from it; nor do I think this is a case in which I could interfere under Article 95. As regards the non-effective list, if this officer did not now retire, his retirement could only be postponed for a comparatively short time, and would then be probably on a higher annual rate of pay; and other retirements would take place as a result, which would go far towards neutralizing any saving. With reference to the Royal Military Academy and the prospective saving suggested in the question, I hope to make arrangements which will give immediate effect to the reduction of expense.

PUBLIC WORKS IN IRELAND.

Mr. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when Her Majesty's Government propose to introduce a measure embodying the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Public Works (Ireland), appointed October 1886, in reference to railway extension generally, and also for the consolidation of the earlier Tramway Acts and the Act of 1883, and the assimilation of their provisions to those in General Railway Acts, especially in relation to the "Leinster Coal Field" in the County of Kilkenny, referred to in the 58th paragraph of the Report of the Commissioners, and concerning which a deputation waited upon him last Session?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is aware that, as indicated in the Queen's Speech, the Government hoped to ask the House to pass certain measures for developing the material resources of Ireland. It is not customary to give details of measures so foreshadowed until the measures themselves are brought before the House on a specific Motion, and I fear I must ask the hon. Member to be kind enough to excuse me if I do not depart from the usual practice in this respect.

Mr. MARUM asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the First Report of the Royal Commission on Public Works (Ireland), in reference to arterial and river drainage; whether he is aware that there are many waterlogged districts in Ireland needing such drainage operations, and amongst others the Carlingford, Johnstown, Cullohill, and Durrow Valley, in North Kilkenny, wherein the occupiers, being statutory termors, have at their own proper expenses fulfilled the necessary preliminaries and procured from the Local Government Board approval and sanction for the required expenditure of £32,000; that the present inartificial and unsatisfactory condition of the Drainage Acts relating to Ireland impede and deter parties interested from carrying out drainage operations; and, whether, in view of the foregoing, Her Majesty's Government are prepared forthwith to introduce a general consolidation measure embodying the recommendations of the Royal Commission, so as to constitute a general workable Drainage Code, without waiting for the passing of the projected local Drainage Bills, which may possibly be rejected from local causes or local inapplicability?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am aware of the recommendations to which the hon. Member refers, and am fully alive to the benefits that might be anticipated from a consolidation measure; but important as this subject is, I am, as I have more than once stated in the House, of opinion that the Drainage and Railway Bills which I hope to introduce are of greater importance.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to introduce the Drainage Bills?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot say now—it depends entirely on the state of public business.

TITHE DISTRAINTS IN WALES.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he had received any Report of the serious conflicts which took place on Tuesday last between the police and the people at Penybryn, Cardiganshire, in connection with the collection of tithes?

***Mr. MATTHEWS**: Yes, Sir; I have received a Report from the Chief Constable. He informs me that on the 19th inst., accompanied by 40 constables and two Superintendents of his own and of the Carmarthenshire force, he proceeded to the parish of Penybryn, for the purpose of keeping the peace during a distraint for tithe. I regret to say that the police were, the Chief Constable informs me, pelted with stones, charged with pitchforks, attacked with bludgeons, and had to fight their way all day. Three constables were injured, and there were many other persons wounded. The Chief Constable has accordingly applied for further aid both of police and military.

MR. A. WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in several other counties in Wales distraints for tithe have been carried out without any disturbance of any kind, owing to the Chief Constables having come to an understanding with the people that no police should be present during the distraints?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I am aware distraints for tithes have been carried out in Wales without any disturbance happening; but I would be extremely loth to assent to the apparently implied suggestion of the hon. Member that the Chief Constable in question was in any way to blame. I assume that officer obeyed his orders, and he appears to have fulfilled his duties properly.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question. Is it not a fact that in other Welsh counties distraints have been conducted without disturbance, in consequence of an understanding being arrived at with the people, and no police being present?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot say I am aware of those facts; but I will make inquiry.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: Arising out of the former question, may I ask the Home Secretary or Minister of Justice will he see that these proceedings to recover tithe are stayed until some arrangement of the same kind between the police and the leaders of the people can be arrived at?

MR. T. ELLIS: I am sorry to have to trouble the right hon. Gentleman again, but this is a serious matter. I have to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any attempt was made by the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire to come to an understanding with the leaders of the people to obviate the necessity of bringing the police to the district during the distraints; whether, on the morning of the distraints being levied, the leaders of the people did not give a guarantee that if the police were withdrawn they would be able to control the people and allow the distraints to be made peaceably; and whether the right hon. Gentleman will ask the Chief Constable of Montgomeryshire what steps he took to come to an understanding with the leaders of the people, and what success attended the arrangement?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have given all the information in my possession; but I shall be glad to make further inquiry, if hon. Members wish, as to what has happened elsewhere. I am aware, though I am not prepared to state the exact arrangements referred to, that former distraints have been made peaceably, and I should be extremely glad if, by advice or suggestion, I could contribute to a similar result. The hon. Member must be aware that the Chief Constable is not subject to my orders, but is under the direction of the magistrates of Quarter Sessions in the county.

THE EVIDENCE OF PRISONERS BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the allegations of certain prisoners were believed in Ireland—namely, that, on the part of the Government, Mr. Andrews, Governor of Downpatrick Prison, offered them their freedom if they would consent to give evidence before the Special Commission in favour of the *Times*—he would propose any means for investigating the truth of those allegations? The hon. Member further asked whether, in the interest of truth, the Chief Secretary would take steps that a searching inquiry should be made respecting the alleged attempts to tamper with the prisoner Tracy; and whether he would afford an opportunity for such inquiry by an open public investigation upon oath, since no kind of private investigation would give any satisfaction to the public?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I presume Tracy will be called before the Commission by hon. Members opposite. I do not know whether, if he is called, he could be examined in respect of the allegations and suggestions of the hon.

Member. In any case, if the Governor used any means for inducing Tracy to give false evidence, either for the *Times* or other parties, he would be guilty of a criminal offence and could be proceeded against.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Apart altogether from the question whether the Governor is guilty or not, is not the Prison Board going to make inquiry into the conduct of the Governor?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I should think the Commissioners are perfectly ready to take action in case any specific accusation is brought to their notice.

Mr. J. F. O'BRIEN: Are the Government content to let public judgment on these charges go against them by default?

RESIDENT MAGISTRATES IN IRELAND.

Mr. T. M. HEALY asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland (1) whether a sentence of six months' imprisonment in default of bail (which was given), was inflicted on Mr. Moore Stack by Captain Welch, R.M., at Tralee on February 12, on the occasion of the trial of Mr. William O'Brien, M.P., upon the evidence of Mr. Cecil Roche, R.M., who presided at Mr. O'Brien's trial; (2) whether the following was a correct transcript of the evidence against Mr. Stack given by Mr. Cecil Roche:—

> "I am aware that this town is proclaimed, forbidding all meetings. I hand in a copy of it (*sic*), signed by Mr. Brown, R.M., whose signature I am acquainted with. I arrived from Petty Sessions at Killarney at a little past 4, and proceeded with a body of police and military, under the command of Colonel Turner, from the station to the gaol at Tralee. They were escorting a prisoner named William O'Brien to the gaol. There was a large and most disorderly crowd, cheering and booing, on the street. They booed for Mr. Balfour and myself. When a little past Benner's Hotel, I saw defendant, Mr. Stack, standing at the door of a house among a group of persons. When the car conveying William O'Brien, the prisoner, passed by, I saw the defendant take off his hat and wave it over his head, and at that time there was mingled cheering and booing from the people in the street. From my knowledge of the town of Tralee as a Resident Magistrate, I think such conduct is extremely likely to lead to a breach of the peace. (Signed), Cecil R. Roche";

(3) whether Mr. Stack was tried in the police barrack for that alleged offence; (4) was there any other evidence save that above given; (6) whether the deposition purported to have been taken under the Petty Sessions Act; (6) was it legal to try such cases out of Petty Sessions; (7) was the result of summarily trying Mr. Stack that the local unpaid Justices, such as Mr. Latchford and Mr. Donovan, J.P.'s were deprived of all opportunity of adjudicating in a case where they had equal jurisdiction with the Resident Magistrates; (8) were there other prisoners similarly dealt with on similar evidence; (8) had the Queen's Bench decided that there was no appeal from a sentence of that kind; (10) and did the Government intend to take any notice of the Resident Magistrates' conduct?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: (1) The sentence mentioned in the question of the hon. Member was given by Captain Welch, R.M., on the occasion mentioned. (2) I have not seen a copy of the evidence of Mr. Roche, but I am informed that the transcript of it in the question of the hon. Member is correct. (3) The case was heard in the police barrack, Mr. Stack and his solicitor having applied that it should be disposed of at once. (4) Other evidence was given as to the general state of the town on the occasion, and the arrest of Mr. Stack. (5, 6, and 7) I am not aware whether the deposition purports to have been taken under the Petty Sessions Act, but I am advised that such cases may be disposed of out of Petty Sessions and by a single magistrate, and in this case the matter was so disposed of at the request of Mr. Stack himself. (8) Other prisoners were dealt with at the same time, but I have no information as to their sentences or the evidence given in their cases. (9) The Queen's Bench Division, I am informed, have not decided to the effect mentioned in the question of the hon. Member, but have stated that they would not interfere by *certiorari* with an order of the kind, except in a strong and clear case of misuse of magisterial authority. (10) In the case of Mr. Stack the action of the Resident Magistrate appears to have been quite regular, and the Government have no intention of interfering.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Wyndham, his private secretary, has stated that no persons have been punished for cheering for Mr. O'Brien or booing for Mr. Balfour? Is it to be understood that Mr. Wyndham excluded the taking off of a hat to salute Mr. O'Brien?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am perfectly aware of the statement made by Mr. Wyndham, and the hon. and learned Gentleman has himself called my attention to it. I do not see that the statement is in any way invalidated by what has taken place under the circumstances referred to.

MR. J. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): The right hon. Gentleman has said the Queen's Bench have not decided there is an appeal. Perhaps the Solicitor General will say if it is within his knowledge that, in respect to another case under similar circumstances, an appeal did lie?

MR. MADDEN: I believe my right hon. Friend is quite correct in his statement. To the best of my recollection, the principle laid down was that the Court would not interfere unless there was want of jurisdiction or misuse of magisterial authority. But I will inquire.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman kindly tell us what in his judgment was the offence for which a sentence of six months' imprisonment was inflicted?

MR. MADDEN: So far as I can see from the facts stated, the offence was conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.

MR. J. REDMOND: To elucidate the matter, I will give notice of a question in reference to the decision I refer to.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PROBATE DUTIES IN SCOTLAND.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate whether the Government would lay upon the Table of the House a detailed statement of the distribution of the grant in aid paid under the Probate Duties (Scotland and Ireland) Act of last Session, showing the amount of grant in aid paid to each parish in Scotland, with a statement of the population, assessable rental, and detailed and gross amounts of the local assessments, and rate per £1 rental, of each such parish?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The statement desired involves the collection of a large amount of details, and they are asked for in relation to an arrangement which expires on the 31st of this month. The Government would not be justified in making for this purpose any large demand on the time and labour of officials, and unless it is found that the information asked for is more easily obtainable than at present appears, I cannot undertake to give the statement. If, contrary to my expectation, the statement can be given, I shall let the hon. Gentleman know.

THE PROSECUTION OF MR. J. D. ELLIOT.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether there was current a warrant for the arrest of J. D. Elliot, lately a collector for the Blackrock Township Commissioners, on a criminal charge; whether the police authorities had lately received information as to J. D. Elliot's residence in Canada; whether they had stated that proceedings for J. D. Elliot's arrest and conveyance to Ireland would not be instituted unless the expenses thereof be guaranteed; and whether the Criminal Law in such cases is to remain inoperative unless private persons or local bodies defray or guarantee, in whole or in part, the cost of executing it?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The reply to the inquiries in the first three paragraphs is in the affirmative. As regards the inquiry in the fourth paragraph, the Government is advised that the expense of arresting and conveying the accused to Ireland should be borne by the Township Commissioners.

A NEW IRISH MAGISTRATE.

Mr. O'KEEFFE asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on whose recommendation and upon what qualification Mr. Francis MacGillicuddy Eager, ex-governor of the County Limerick Gaol, had recently been appointed a Magistrate of the County of Clare?

MR. BALFOUR: Mr. Eager is a resident in the Kilkee district of the County Clare, and has been appointed to the Commission of the Peace, being recommended by the Lieutenant of the County as a fit and proper person to be a Magistrate.

MR. T. M. HEALY: May I ask is the Lord Chancellor aware that there were constant debates in the House during Mr. Forster's time regarding the conduct of the Governor of Limerick Gaol, and it was shown that he had been guilty of cruelty towards the prisoners there? This man is now made a Magistrate.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid I cannot answer that question.

IRISH ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W. (for Dr. Kenny): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that out of a total of 894 Army Medical Officers, 429 are from the Irish Medical Schools, he will consider the question of putting on the Committee of Inquiry into the Status, Pay, and Conditions of Service of Medical Officers in the Army and Navy at least one representative of the Irish Medical Schools?

***Mr. STANHOPE**: I can only refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on this subject yesterday.

MOONLIGHTERS AND THE KENMARE ESTATE.

Mr. THEOBALD (Essex, Romford): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many of the Moonlighters have been arrested who are reported to have visited, armed and undisguised, the farms of several tenants on the Kenmare estate who had refused to sell stock, or to join the Plan of Campaign, fired shots into the houses, and warned the inmates that if they offended any further they would receive other and more serious visits; and whether he is aware that at one house the Moonlighters shot a horse valued at £45, and also, on Mrs. Moynihans (the wife of one of the tenants) looking through the window, one of the Moonlighters shouted, "Shoot the old hag"?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Seven men have been arrested on suspicion of having been concerned in these outrages. It is a fact that in one of the houses a horse valued at £45 was shot, and the owner intends to seek for compensation. It is also a fact that threats were uttered. I am not informed whether the precise words mentioned in the question were used.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the sensational news in the question was supplied by a Central News correspondent who is a clerk on Lord Kenmare's estate?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My information does not come from that source.

Mr. SEXTON: Is there any reason for alleging that this matter is connected with the Plan of Campaign, or any political proceeding, and how is it that in Kerry, which has been under the Crimes Act for two years, these raids cannot be prevented by the Government.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is difficult to prevent them, owing to the action taken by the friends of the right hon. Gentleman in endeavouring to establish the Plan of Campaign on the Kenmare estate.

Mr. SEXTON: Are not these raids really ordinary raids for liquor and money; and what is the evidence that they are connected with the Plan of Campaign?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the belief of those who have made investigation.

WICKLOW ASSIZES.

Mr. WILLIAM CORBET: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the protest of the Grand Jury of the County of Wicklow, at the Assizes just concluded, against the Crown summoning so large a number of special jurors, 275, when the business consisted of only one special case; and whether any steps will be taken to put a stop to such proceedings in future?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: My attention has been called to the protest of the Grand Jury of the County of Wicklow by the question of the hon. Member. I am informed, however, that when this protest was handed in to the learned Judge, he said that as there were appended to the protest the signatures of 100 persons who did not appear when summoned, it was hard to entertain their complaint. The case at Wicklow was one of grave importance—being an attack on a house and its surrounding by a riotous mob. The Attorney General can give no undertaking that cases of such importance will not be tried by special juries. The Sheriff had no option but to summon the number of special jurors mentioned in the question.

Mr. CORBET: Is it the fact that in consequence of the large number of specials jurors summoned, the Crown were enabled to pack the jury by excluding all Catholics from it; and is the right hon. Gentleman aware that over 30 jurors were ordered to stand aside?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Will the hon. Member kindly give notice of the question?

PLEURO PNEUMONIA IN CUMBERLAND.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): I desire to ask whether the recent outbreak of Pleuro Pneumonia in Cumberland was traced to cattle imported from county Tyrone, as stated in the *Mark Lane Express*?

THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount LEWISHAM) Lewisham: An inquiry has been made by an inspector of the Privy Council as to the origin of the recent outbreak of Pleuro Pneumonia at Burgon Sands, near Carlisle, and he has been informed that the animal which introduced the disease was one of a lot of 14 brought from the north of Ireland into Cumberland on the 1st of February. The animals had been purchased at various fairs, but the dealer is unable to say where he purchased the diseased animal, or to give the name of the seller.

INSULTING THE POLICE.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is true that three young girls were summoned, on Monday, the 11th instant, by Sergeant Dolan, of Fermoy, for booing at the sergeant and his men while leaving Coolagown chapel, and making uncomplimentary allusions to Mr. Balfour; whether the only exclamation towards the sergeant complained of was one of the girls calling him "Smiler," his Fermoy *nom de plume*; whether the chairman, Colonel Deane, and the other magistrates present, dismissed the cases, stating that he hoped no further attempts would be made by the female population of Fermoy to scandalize the Government; and whether steps will be taken to prevent similar prosecutions in future?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the three women summoned on the occasion in question were not young girls. One was an elderly woman, and the others aged about 25 and 18 years respectively, nor were they summoned on the innocent ground alleged in the second paragraph. Sunday after Sunday the police upon leaving the chapel after Divine Service had been mobbed by a number of women and boys who followed them along the road, hooting them, calling them bloodhounds, murderers, and using towards them obscene expressions. For this disgraceful conduct, which has become intolerable, Sergeant Power summoned the three women, as the ringleaders, to give bail for future good behaviour. At Petty Sessions, these defendants having expressed regret, were let off with a caution, the Chairman, Colonel Deane, warning them that if there was a repetition of the conduct, they would be severely dealt with.

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland upon how many estates the Plan of Campaign is in operation in Ireland, giving the number by provinces?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Plan of Campaign is in operation on estates in Ireland as follows:—Ulster, three estates; Leinster, seven estates; Connaught, four estates; Munster, ten estates. Total 24.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Is the Plan not now in operation on 38 estates, and are there not 59 other estates where the Plan of Campaign has come to an end by the concession on the part of the landlords of the terms asked for?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am afraid the hon. Member is not correct in that statement.

CATTLE IN TRANSIT.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin Co.): I wish to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any steps have been taken to ensure the more humane treatment of Irish sheep and cattle carried from Irish ports to English and Scotch markets; whether any competent judges estimate the loss caused by the present treatment of sheep and cattle on the journey from Ireland to the British markets at 15s. per head of fat cattle and at 10s. per head of store stock; and whether, if no local power exists to improve the method of transit, the Government contemplate any fresh legislation on the subject?

VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: The question has frequently been under the notice of the Agricultural Department, and some years ago a Committee was appointed to inquire into the matter, and an Order of Council was passed relating to the transit by water. It is understood that a conference is shortly to be held of representatives of some of the leading agricultural societies of Great Britain and Ireland with the object of formulating some practical suggestions for ameliorating the present state of things, after which they will submit their views to the Privy Council.

COURT MARTIAL IN CORK.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that a court martial was held recently in Cork barracks on a private of the Welsh Regiment and two privates of the 4th Hussars who were charged with participating in a procession at Youghal in celebration of Father Kennedy's release, when cheers were given for William O'Brien, and who were sentenced, the infantryman to five months' and the Hussars to four months' imprisonment; and under what military law was the act of the soldiers said to be a breach of discipline?

*MR. E STANHOPE: The soldiers referred to were convicted on the 11th inst., by a district court martial of conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline, under section 40 of the Army Act, 1881, in having taken part in a demonstration and procession of a political character at Youghal, and in having behaved in a disorderly manner. Soldiers are distinctly forbidden by the Queen's regulations from taking part in any political demonstrations.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): Arising out of that answer, I should like to ask, as these men were convicted for having taken part in a demonstration, whether it is not a fact that certain officers and soldiers recently took part in an Orange demonstration at Enniskillen and were not convicted?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I have no knowledge on the subject. It might be that there was no evidence upon which they could be convicted.

MR. W. REDMOND: I would remind the right hon. Gentleman of the question I put on the paper as to officers, non-commissioned officers, and men being unquestionably present at——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member will put the question down in the usual way.

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY THE POLICE.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary whether his attention has been called to the fact that the foreman printer of the *Tipperary Nationalist*, who was severely bludgeoned by the police, and whose head is still bandaged and unhealed, was summoned on Wednesday, 13th instant, for taking part in a riot and unlawful assembly; whether he is aware that at a previous Petty Sessions in Clonmel a policeman was fined a guinea for assaulting the printer on the same occasion; and whether, under the circumstances, he will direct the prosecution of the printer to be withdrawn?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As regards the circumstances of the riot and unlawful assembly out of which the charges in question arose, I would beg to refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question put on 8th March by the hon. Member for Tipperary East. The charge against the printer will, by consent, not be heard until after the hearing of the appeal lodged by the constable against the Magistrates' decision.

POLICE CONDUCT AT CASTLEDERMOTT.

DR. TANNER (Mid-Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on what authority and by whose directions did a constable named Moscal demand admission, and, on being refused, endeavoured by force to enter the house in Castledermott where the local members of the Gaelic Athletic Club were holding their St. Patrick's Day meeting last Sunday; whether Constable Looney, with Moscal, followed the members of the club to their practising ground on that day, and if it is a fact that these constables made use of remarks on that occasion irritating in their character to the Gaels and calculated to provoke a breach of the peace; whether he is aware that the Secretary of the club in question was subsequently obliged to go to the police-station and complain of the drunken and disorderly conduct of

Constables Smith, Looney, and Moslca on the night in question; and whether he stated at the police barrack that he made the report fearing a collision might take place between the intoxicated policemen and the Gaels, whom he alleged were insulted; and whether an inquiry will be made into the circumstances of the case, as to the alleged police offenders?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary Authorities report that Constable Moscal did not attempt to force his way into the room; he left at once when told he could not enter. As regards the second allegation, the policemen were mere spectators of the game, and were not interfered with; they made ordinary comments between themselves, but not in the hearing of the players. After the Secretary called at the barrack and complained that the policemen were disorderly (not drunk), the sergeant at once paraded the men and found them quite sober and correct. No other complaints were made by any one that the Gaels had been insulted.

FOYNES PIER.

MR. MURPHY (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I wish to ask the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether the barge and landing stage at the Foynes Pier, which were removed some time ago by order of the Board of Works, had been in the same position for many years without any question having been raised about them; what were the particular circumstances which arose last year that caused the Board of Works to consider that it was necessary for the Waterford and Limerick Railway Company to enter into some agreement with regard to those landing appliances; whether the Railway Company pointed out that as the barge in question was not their property at all, but the property of the Steamship Company, they were not in a position to carry out any agreement with respect to it; whether he is aware that though the landing appliances were an advantage to the Railway Company, they were also a great public convenience; whether the public are now deprived of this convenience; and what is the reason for the whole proceeding?

MR. JACKSON: I am afraid I cannot decide the matters contained in the question across the floor of the House. I believe the hon. Member is anxious to know accurately what took place between the Board of Works and the Railway Company, and if there is any way in which I can help to settle it I shall be glad if the hon. Member will speak to me on the subject.

RELIEVING OFFICER, DEREHAM.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the relieving officer of the town of Dereham, in the Mitford Union of Norfolk, resides at Reymerston, a distance of seven miles from Dereham, and that when a poor person requires a coffin the relatives have to go the whole of that distance and back in order to obtain the necessary order; and whether, as the delay then arising frequently causes the retention of the uncoffined corpse for several days in the living and sleeping rooms of the family, he will take steps to secure that the relieving officer, or his deputy, shall reside either in or within a short distance of the town?

***THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD** (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I learn that it is the case that the relieving officer whose district includes Dereham resides at Reymerston, a distance of between six and seven miles from Dereham. The relieving officer attends at Dereham on Fridays to distribute relief, and to receive fresh applications for relief. In the case of a death, and a coffin being required at the cost of the Union it would be necessary to communicate with the relieving officer. I shall be glad if the hon. Member will give me information as to the facts of any cases in which there has been undue delay in the provision of coffins, and I will direct the Inspector of the District to confer with the Guardians on the subject.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I desire to know whether if the Vote on Account is taken to-night it will be necessary to take Tuesday from private Members?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: It will be necessary to take the formal stages of the Consolidated Fund Bill before private Members' Motions. On Monday I hope we shall broach the subject of Naval Defence.

Mr. DUFF (Banffshire): Does the Government propose to proceed with the Naval programme before the House has the Returns moved for by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: We shall proceed by Resolution, and the stages of the Bill will afford opportunities for discussion.

MOTION.

—o—

POOR LAW (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. De Cobain, Bill to amend the Poor Laws of Ireland in relation to Rating, ordered to be brought in by Mr. De Cobain, Mr. Lea, Colonel Waring, and Mr. Macartney.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 169.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

—o—

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

Supply—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[See *Page* 256.]

Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): In rising to ask the attention of the Committee to the item in the law charges affecting the salary of the Attorney General, I think that, whoever else complains of my taking that course, the Attorney General will not complain of it. He cannot but be aware that there have been abroad—if I may use a term familiar to himself—certain charges and allegations against the course which he has pursued, and against others who sit on that Bench and some who sit on this. I am quite sure that there is nothing which the Attorney General would more desire that to meet those allegations and charges face to face, and give his own explanation of them. Now, Sir, I can assure the Attorney General that in what I feel it my duty to say he will hear not one word inconsistent with that estimation for his great ability and his high character which is felt by his opponents no less than his friends. But that is all the greater reason why, in my opinion, a justification and explanation should be offered of certain circumstances to which I now desire to call attention. I wish to ask leave to address certain questions to the Attorney General to which I know—for I have the honour of the acquaintance of the hon. and learned Gentleman—he will answer *ex animo.* I can assure him that the answers he gives us upon matters of fact within his knowledge will be received by all in this House with implicit credence. It seems strange that it should be necessary to assure any Member of this House that, upon a matter affecting his character, his word will be accepted by the House Commons. But in these recent days it is necessary to make that assurance, because the whole origin of that with which I have to deal—the whole origin of this Special Commission—and all the shameful scandals connected with it, is due to the departure in this House from the noble traditions of accepting the word of a Member of it. If, when the foul and false charge was brought against the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), the House of Commons and its Leaders, mindful of its ancient traditions, had said, "A Member of the House has risen in his place, and stated that the charge is false, and we are bound to believe him," we should not have had all the bitterness which has arisen in this case. When the hon. Member for Cork rose in his place and said that the letter published in the *Times* of the 18th of April was not his letter, but was forged, hon. Members opposite did not believe him; and they told him that they did not believe him. I do not think that there is a man on the Treasury Bench who does not regret that course. They know now that the hon. Member for Cork spoke the truth, and that, according to the traditions of the House, his word ought to have been believed. I confess that in all that has happened nothing is more miserable, nothing more melancholy than this, that the example should have been set in the manner in which it was set of rejecting the word of the hon. Member for Cork—and the word of the hon. Member for Cork is as good as that of any Member of this House. There are two persons who, in my opinion, must be held specially responsible for what has occurred in that respect. One is the Leader of the House, charged with the conduct of Government business, and the other is a person who exercises a great and deserved authority in this House, who might, I think, have led the House through a different course, and that person is the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington). Well, now, unfortunately, that course was taken, the House of Commons refused to believe the word of its Member, and told him he ought to have gone to a jury. A jury, Sir? What jury? A jury with such a foreman as the Prime Minister? What chance would he have had before such a jury? To what purpose would it have been that the charge was withdrawn; to what purpose would it have been that the forgery of the *Times'* letters was confessed; to what purpose would it have been that the Court declared that so far as the hon. Member for Cork was concerned the case was closed? He would as certainly have been found guilty as if no evidence had been brought before the Court. Therefore, it is plain that as the hon. Member for Cork has spoken the truth in his place, so he was right in refusing to go to a jury. Then the Government appointed a Special Commission. I have to ask what was the position which the Attorney General occupied before that Commission; indeed, I would ask what position he occupied before that Commission sat. Now, it is said, that the position of the Attorney General is that of a private counsel in a private suit. Assuming, for a moment, that that is so, I would ask how that bears upon the position of the Attorney General? In the first place, I would observe that if the Attorney General was a private counsel in a private suit he was there—in a sense which I will explain directly—as a volunteer. He need not have been counsel for the *Times* in that suit, and I will illustrate that to the House. There was another Member of this House who held a general retainer for the *Times*—I mean the hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Sir C. Russell). There were days when holding a general retainer for the *Times* was an honour to any man in the profession; those days are gone by. But the hon. and learned Member for Hackney declined to hold that retainer. I think I can judge of the circumstances which actuated him in returning his general retainer. He is proud of the nationality to which he belongs. The hon. and learned Member has never been ashamed to confess that he belonged to what I am afraid, under existing circumstances, I must call a despised and hated race. He, at least, was not eager and anxious to appear as the public accuser of his countrymen and their representatives. The hon. and learned Member is not only an Irishman, but a distinguished Member of the House of Commons. He is one of the foremost men in what we are pleased to call the Parliament of a united Empire, where all men are treated alike. To him, at least, it was not a congenial task to be called upon to endeavour to fix the stigma of infamy upon some 85 Members of the House of Commons, constituting about one-eighth of their whole body. To him, at least, a work of that description would not have been a labour of love. The hon. and learned Member rejected the retainer of the *Times*, but the office which he refused was embraced *con amore* by Her Majesty's Attorney General. What is the position of the Attorney General? I am sure that no man can say that the office he has thus willingly undertaken he did not perform with the zeal and ability of a man who has his heart in the case; and if 85 Members of the House of Commons, the Representatives of the Irish nation, are not to be marked and branded with infamy, so that they may deserve to be expelled from this House, whosoever fault it may be, it will not be the fault of Her Majesty's Attorney General. Now, I have spoken of the theory of private employment suggested in this case and its bearing upon the office of the Attorney General. I will now ask to be allowed to inquire what is the office of the Attorney General, and what are his duties. The office of the Attorney General is an ancient office and an office of dignity. It is distinguished by the highest salary and emoluments of any office under the Crown. According to the last Return the emoluments amount to about £12,000 a year, including salary and fees; and, of course, in Committee of Supply it may be asked, "What are the services, and to whom have those services to be performed, for which this salary is granted?" That is surely a fit subject of inquiry. What are the duties of the office of the Attorney General to which this great dignity and this great salary are granted? I think he will agree with me that I define them rightly when I say that his first duty is to advise the Crown and the Ministers of the Crown in all affairs, foreign and domestic—a great and an important duty. During the very short time that I had experience of the office of Law Officer of the Crown I came to know the amount and the importance of the work attached to that office. Then the Attorney General has another duty —viz., to advise this House in all matters which affect the interests and the honour of its Members. That is the second duty of the Attorney General; and he has another duty, perhaps the highest of all. He is the Leader and the example of the English Bar, and the highest guardian of its traditions. These are high and honourable duties, especially the last duty, because upon the manner of its exercise depends in no small degree the spirit and temper of the criminal administration of this country; and it is from the examples of men who have held that office, and the exercise of public opinion upon that office, that the Public Prosecutors of to day differ from the Public Prosecutors of the time of Sir Edward Coke when he prosecuted Sir Walter Raleigh. The Attorney General will not deny that these are functions which ought to be jealously guarded and carefully watched by the House of Commons. The first question I have to ask is, "How came the Attorney General, holding that office to which these duties are attached, to be private counsel in this matter?"—supposing that he was private counsel in this matter of the Commission. How far was that position consistent with the duties which he had to perform? His first duty was to advise the Government and this House in matters of great public interest. Is this not a matter involving the profoundest political consequences both in and out of this House? I would only state in the language of the Home Secretary—in which I freely concur—that this is a matter of the highest importance, and is of the character of a "State inquiry." What can be graver than the impeachment of 85 Members of the House of Commons before a tribunal which is, to say the least, a solecism in the Constitution? What can be graver than a question which so deeply affects the relations between England and Ireland? If ever there were matters upon which the Government and the House ought to have been advised by the Attorney General, they were these questions which are brought before the Special Commission. The Attorney General began by being counsel in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter." I will say nothing upon that at this moment, but rather upon the consequences that followed from it. I cannot dissever it altogether, because it was the speech of the Attorney General in that case which was the foundation of the present Commission. The question of the private practice of the Attorney General is, of course, very germane to the question involved in this Vote. I am not sure whether it is not a universal rule of the Civil Service, or one which you have recently made, that the public shall have the full time of those to whom it pays adequate emolument. I am not raising the question now; but this I venture to affirm, that that private practice must be subject to these limitations: it must not be of a character to disable him from advising the Crown and the House of Commons. Let us apply these considerations to the plea that this was private business of the Attorney General in which the public had no concern: I will give this illustration. Supposing that the Foreign Secretary were to be largely concerned in foreign loans on his own account and were to say that that was private business, would it not be at once said that that was a kind of business which was inconsistent with the business which he was doing for the State? In the same way, if the Chanceller of the Exchequer were engaged in private operations of a financial character—I beg his pardon for making the hypothesis—but supposing any Chancellor of the Exchequer were engaged in private financial operations, everybody would say that such business was inconsistent with the position of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, but is it not equally true, in the case of the Attorney General, that his private business is inconsistent with the duties of his office, and does not come within the limits of the private business which the Attorney General ought to take? Consider what is the character of this business. The Government declared from the first that they desired to stand perfectly clear and impartial in this matter. Did it tend to that position in the estimation of the public that this private business should be undertaken by the Attorney General? Was it not, of all others, that which was likely to destroy that feeling and impression? Did it, in fact, produce that impression; and was it intended to convey that impression to the public? In July, 1888, at the time of "O'Donnell v. Walter," this is what the private client of the Attorney General, the *Times* newspaper, says—

> "These charges against Mr. Parnell have been formulated in open Court by the Head of the English Bar, a man whose eminence, personal, professional, and official, offers an absolute guarantee that in his learned judgment he has the means of proving what he says."

That is the way in which the position of the Attorney General was presented by his private client to the English nation. And that was the position that was accepted by the English nation. These forged bills accepted by the *Times* were endorsed without knowledge by the Attorney General. Who was not deluded by that? It was not the letters alone, but the whole of the charges which were so accredited. My noble Friend the Member for Rossendale having repeated certain charges in "Parnellism and Crime" in this House, was asked upon what ground he made them, and he said—

> "I submit to the House that, having stated what was the source of my information, and what was the authority upon which those statements were made, I was not bound, nor was it in any way necessary for me, to attempt to prove or substantiate the statement that had been made. Had I made the charge on my own responsibility, the case, it seems to me, would have been entirely different; but, having repeatedly pointed out that I was only referring to the statements made in the *Times*, it appeared, and it still appears, to me that there was no responsibility resting upon me to prove or substantiate those statements."

That was the position taken by my noble Friend, and by tens of thousands of other persons. It was taken on the authority of the *Times*, and was absolutely guaranteed by the official authority of Her Majesty's Attorney General. Was this a private question? I am not arguing here, or objecting that the Attorney General should not appear in a horse case or a running down case. But this was not a horse case or a running-down case. You do not take three Judges from the Bench, you do not have the paraphernalia of a State trial, for such cases. This has nothing of the character of private business. Let us look what was the indictment in the speech of the Attorney General. And this is the first question I will ask him. Did he, or did he not, advise the Government at any time with reference to this matter? He will know that I do not speak strictly by the card. Did he at any time give advice to the Government with reference to this matter before or after the Commission sat? That is my first question to the Attorney General. It seems to me that, whether he answers it in the negative or the affirmative, it is equally difficult to reconcile his position in this case. If he did not, why did he not? If there was a question of this gravity affecting the State, affecting the enemies of the Queen in America, affecting the House of Commons and the honour of its Members, why did he not advise the Government, and why did he not advise the House of Commons? Now, let me point out another thing—the proceeding was one of a character in which the official position of the Attorney General might be, and probably would be, undoubtedly would be, involved. If it happened that it was proved that the documents were forged, who was the person who ought to prosecute the author of the forged documents? Her Majesty's Attorney General, the Chief Public Prosecutor. If, on the other hand, it were proved that there were 85 Members of the House of Commons the associates of criminals and assassins, who is the person to direct the proceedings against them, either out of this House or in it? Her Majesty's Attorney General. By what right did he voluntarily disable himself from performing those duties? We are asked to vote him a salary of £12,000 a-year. When the Judgment of the Commission comes up for review, as it must come up for review, who should advise this House as to the course it should take? Why, the principal Law Adviser of the Crown. Therefore, I ask the Attorney General, did he, or did he not, publicly or privately, directly or indirectly, advise Her Majesty's Government, or any Members of it, in respect to this transaction? Well, if he says he did not, by what right are we, the guardians of the taxpayers, to vote his salary for services not performed? Of course, if services of this kind are abandoned in favour of private practice, the remuneration should be granted by the private employers. I have another question which I will ask the Attorney General. Did he ask the assent of the Government to his employment in this particular case? Did he do it with their knowledge and upon consultation with them, and did they approve of his taking that course? I cannot but think that he asked their assent. I cannot imagine that a man in his position would undertake so fearful a responsibility without consulting his colleagues. I must say, if he did not, he used them very badly, and if he did, then they used the country badly. I come now to the time given up to this business. I venture to think that, in exercising this privilege of taking private practice, it should be exercised with scrupulous regard to the demands of the Public Service. I know how scrupulous in this regard was my able and distinguished Friend the Member for Bury. I know he almost declined private business. If you are to have private business occupying nine months, and which may occupy three months more, what becomes of the service of the State? If that is to go on, you will have to pay your Attorney General by piece work. No, Sir; if we are to vote him £12,000 a-year, we cannot accept the leavings of the time of the Attorney General. And I am sure the Leader of the House, after all that has happened, would not, if he were asked, say that it was a wise, or a prudent, or a proper thing to have the Attorney General conducting these proceedings. But I do not believe this will be the line taken by the Attorney General. He will not say, "This was my private business, and I disabled myself from the service of the Crown." That certainly is not the view of the Home Secretary, who said that this was a State inquiry. What is the tribunal? It was specially created by the Government to inquire into an indictment framed by the Government. The Government determined the whole business from beginning to end, and it is perfectly idle to say this was private business. If the Government gave their consent, then all I have said does not apply, and the Attorney General was quite in his right place, doing the business of his masters; and though we may ultimately have to call the Government to account if there were anything wrong, there is not a word to be said against the Attorney General on account of his appearance before that Court. If it was, as the Home Secretary said, a State inquiry, if it was a State Court constituted by the Government on an indictment framed by the Government against parties summoned by the Government, of course the Attorney General was quite right to be there. That being so, all that we are entitled to inquire is whether, in that public capacity, the Attorney General properly performed the duties of that public capacity. In that part of the argument there is one consideration which, I think, will satisfy the Committee that this is a State inquiry, and not one between private parties, and that is the mode in which the official evidence was dealt with. When a client retains the Attorney General in a private suit he retains a lawyer of ability and experience; but he does not purchase with him the whole influence and authority of the Government. Therefore, in a private suit, the Attorney General never could have occupied the position and taken the course he did. In a private suit a client has a right to issue subpœnas, but he could not get official witnesses to stay months in London who were required elsewhere. The Attorney General, at least, could not be deceived by the extraordinary theory in regard to subpœnas propounded by the Chief Secretary. If a private client subpœnas my servant, he does not keep him at the Courts for one or two months, but the solicitor, one, two, or three days before he is to give his evidence, gives him notice when he will be wanted. That is not the way these men were dealt with, and that fact alone shows that it was not a private suit. But, far more important than that, the clerks of private solicitors do not go into Her Majesty's gaols at their will and pleasure and swear the convicts there. Who ever heard of such a thing in a private suit? I should like to know what provision in our Criminal Law gives a private suitor the right to enter a prison and swear a prisoner at his pleasure. I am not, of course, going into detail in this matter, which we have discussed before; but I can see nothing of the character of a private solicitor in a private suit. It has all the character of a transaction in which the Attorney General was the Public Prosecutor, and had the authority of the Government behind him, but he had not the guarantee that the evidence would be properly dealt with—that when a solicitor went into a gaol to get evidence he would be a proper man under proper restraint and proper responsibility. If this is a public prosecution, as in my opinion indeed it is, then, instead of Soameses and Shannons and Houstons, and people of that description it would have been in the responsible hands of the Solicitor to the Treasury, whom everybody could have relied upon to have dealt fairly with the defendants, and done nothing that anybody could censure. Whether or not this was a private suit, it certainly was not an ordinary tribunal. The question is, what was the character of it? I take the reasonable words, because I believe them to be true, of the Home Secretary. It was a State inquiry, and the position of the Attorney General was what, in military language, may be described as that of an officer in full pay detached for particular service. That I believe was the true position of the Attorney General before this tribunal. But if he was a *quasi*-Public Prosecutor he was not, in fact, the Public Prosecutor. I use the phrase *quasi*-Public Prosecutor. What was his duty in that position? There is nothing better known in the administration of the Criminal Law of this country than the condition by which a Public Prosecutor is bound. I say in this country, and I mean by that, in England I remember a remarkable speech which was made in this House by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James). It was made, I think, on the Bill to enable a prisoner to be examined. My right hon. and learned Friend said he would vote for it in England, but not in Ireland, and he gave as his reason that the administration of the Criminal Law in England is governed by a moderation and justice in the conduct of a prosecution which are, unhappily, unknown in Ireland. The position of a Public Prosecutor in this country is that of a man who exercises an almost judicial function. The Attorney General, I am sure, will not deny that the Public Prosecutor is not a counsel fighting for a verdict. He is bound to place before the Court the truth, and the whole truth, whether it tends to further the case for the prosecution or to exculpate the accused. Those are the sacred principles by law happily established in the criminal jurisprudence of this country. The prosecuting counsel has, above all things, to take care that the accused should not be taken by surprise; that he should have every opportunity of knowing what in the way of evidence or argument is going to brought against him. And, above all, he is bound to satisfy himself that the evidence he is about to adduce is good, solid, truthful, *bonâ fide* evidence; and the man who, engaged in a criminal prosecution, places before the Court or the jury evidence in which he does not believe, which he has not taken care to ascertain to be solid and truthful evidence, violates the traditions of the English Bar in respect of criminal prosecutions. Perhaps I may be allowed to refer, without being accused of egotism, to certain circumstances which occurred within my own experience when I was at the Home Office. A case was brought before me of a man who had been tried and convicted, and there was a petition for his pardon. One circumstance that was brought to my knowledge was that there was a witness whose evidence might have induced the Judge and jury to take a different view of the case; that that fact was within the knowledge of the prosecution, and yet the prosecution did not call that witness. I sent for the person who had the conduct of the prosecution, and I told him that in my opinion he had violated the first principles of justice in not calling the witness whose evidence might have induced the Judge and jury to take a different view of the case, and in his presence I drew up a pardon for the prisoner. Those are the principles that ought to govern prosecutors, and the only question that we have to ask is, whether those principles have been strictly observed in this case? Was there fair and complete notice? And here I wish to guard myself—I will speak of nothing in regard to the matters before the tribunal which I consider to be now *sub judice* — [*Laughter from the Ministerial benches*] — I will explain what I mean. I do not regard the question of that which relates exclusively to the forged letters as *sub judice*. That charge has been struck out of the indictment. The Court has declared that nothing they can say or do, that no circumstance that can arise relating to it, can alter that part of the case, and I have as much right to comment on that part of the case now as I shall have ten years hence. I have never, so far as I am aware, commented on what was *sub judice*. The charge brought against me last night by the Chief Secretary was—no doubt unintentionally —not fair on that point. He said I had commented on witnesses whose evidence would have to be considered by the Commission. I did not intend to so comment, and if I departed from that intention I express my regret for having done so. I never intended to comment on the evidence of any witnesses except those like Houston and Pigott, whose evidence is exclusively confined to the question of the forged letters. [An hon. MEMBER: Le Caron.] An hon. Member says that I referred to Le Caron; but I do not think I said more than it was necessary to say with regard to Le Caron. To the best of my recollection I did not. When we are dealing with men like Houston and Pigott I find it very difficult to distinguish in point of equality between the two. The man who bought the forged letters and then burnt the correspondence relating to them is, on the whole, quite as bad as the other man. He had not the same temptation; he is a man who moved, I believe, in the best society, and he has at his back gentlemen possessing great resources, Lord Richard Grosvenor and Sir Rowland Blennerhassett for example, who back up the Loyal and Patriotic Union. A man of that kind who embarks in these speculations in calumny and who is found out is, indeed, in an unfortunate position. I only intend to deal with that part of the case which affects exclusively the forged letters. Now, what was the position of the Attorney General with reference to these forged letters? First of all, as he was bound to do in his capacity as counsel, he vouched the authenticity of the letters. He vouched for them at the earliest period. On July 4, during the trial of "O'Donnell v. Walter," in that speech which, in fact, formed the indictment, he said—

> "The *Times* will not go back from whatever they have said. They took the greatest possible pains to satisfy themselves about the letter. It was in their possession for months, and the most careful investigation was made into its genuineness, and every possible means was taken to investigate the matter, among others that of comparison of handwriting."

I would ask the Attorney General what he meant by "among others?" What were these other means which had been resorted to? Then the Attorney General went on,—

> "Gentlemen, do you think that the *Times* has rushed red-hot into the matter without having something before them which they assume to be correct?"

Then later on he vouched the letters, I think in this House on July 27. The hon. and learned Gentleman will correct me if I am wrong. He said—

> "The whole case which I opened I was prepared to prove, and if I am counsel for the *Times* again shall be prepared to prove. The evidence is available, if it is wanted,"

and so on. Well, I assume in favour of the Attorney General that he vouched the evidence, because a Public Prosecutor has no right to prosecute unless he is prepared to vouch the evidence and is satisfied that it is true. If the Under Secretary for India will contain himself I will explain what I mean. No Attorney General or Solicitor General has a right to accuse 85 gentlemen, whether Members of Parliament or not, of foul crime unless he is satisfied with the evidence, and is prepared to prove his case. [Sir J. GORST made an observation which did not reach the reporter.] If the hon. and learned Gentleman dissents from that proposition, I am very glad that he is no longer Solicitor General, and that he has gone to the India Office, for which office no one can doubt his capacity. The Attorney General vouchsafed—as he was bound to vouchsafe—the substantiality of the evidence. Then the next question that I have to put to the Attorney General is this—When did he first know of Pigott as the author and producer of these letters, upon whom the question of their genuineness rested? Then there is another question which I know will seem a strange one to ask. Did the Attorney General know anything of these letters before they were published, and was he ever consulted by his private client, the *Times* newspaper, as to the wisdom and safety of publishing the first letter? I ask him to answer that question. When was he first informed that Pigott was the person from whom the letters had come, and whether that was what he meant when he used the words "among others?" Now, Sir, Pigott set up a false pretence,—false upon the face of it, and which the solicitor for the *Times* I cannot help thinking must have known not to be true—namely, that the reason why Pigott and Houston were not to be mentioned was that they were afraid of personal danger. Now, however, by Pigott's confession, we have it that in his case, at all events, this was not what he was afraid of. What he feared was not personal danger, but his own personal character. That was the only fear that would have kept him out of the witness-box. I wish to ask the Attorney General, and I am very sorry that I did not put the question before, because it might have saved my putting an hypothesis which I have no desire to put—I wish to ask the Attorney General when was he made acquainted with the letter of November 17, in which Pigott declared his own infamy and informed Houston and Soames that if he went into the witness-box he thought his character would be made known, with the result that his evidence would destroy the case for the prosecution? I should have thought that it was the first duty of those concerned to ascertain the character and the credibility of a witness upon whose evidence this foul and monstrous charge alone rested. If an inquiry into his character was not made at first, there was negligence of the grossest kind; but anyhow, whatever may have been the case after that letter of November 17, there could no longer be any excuse for reliance upon Pigott.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (SIR R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): The right hon. Gentleman is wrong as to the date of the letter. It was the 15th of November.

SIR W. HARCOURT: There were, I think, two letters—one of the 11th of November and another of the 15th. The statement I am referring to was contained in the letter of the 17th.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I know the letter you mean. It is dated November 15th.

SIR W. HARCOURT: One letter was dated November 11th, and the other, Sandy Cove West, November 17th. That is the letter I am quoting from. Pigott warns the prosecution in it that his testimony will sensibly weaken their case, and that it would do them an injury instead of serving their cause. Now, this was the notice served on the prosecution by the principal witness upon whom the case rested, that he was in his own opinion—the only sound opinion he ever held—undeserving of belief. That was the situation of the prosecution when they had at issue the fame and character, and something perhaps dearer than life, to the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), a fellow Member of this House with the Attorney General himself. Did the Attorney General know of that letter? I must ask the House to consider what are the two alternatives. Suppose that he did not know of the letter. The letter itself was sent to Soames, the solicitor of the *Times*. It was addressed to Houston. It was one of the letters that Houston deliberately burnt.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: No; it was produced.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Longford, N.): Only a copy of it.

An hon. MEMBER: Was it burnt by Soames?

*SIR R. WEBSTER: Mr. Soames never burnt or destroyed any paper.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Was the letter sent to Mr. Soames?

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but the particular letter he is referring to was dated the 15th of November. It was handed to Mr. Soames and produced by Mr. Soames.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am endeavouring to state the case as fairly as I can, and if I have fallen into any error I am sorry for it. I have no desire whatever to act unfairly. Now, it is a very remarkable circumstance in this prosecution that this principal witness was not subpœnaed at the beginning of the case. Why was he not subpœnaed then? It might be supposed that, as he was the principal witness, the first step would have been to subpœna him. The Commission sat in October, and it was not until some way on in November that the subpœna was served. The correspondence with Pigott was in the early part of November, but he was not subpœnaed. Why was he not subpœnaed? If Mr. Soames, having in his possession this letter advertising and notifying to the prosecution that their principal witness was undeserving of belief —if he suppressed it and did not communicate it to the Attorney General, I have no hesitation in saying that Mr. Soames ought to be struck off the rolls. A more scandalous attempt on the part of a solicitor to deceive a Court in a criminal case and to deceive his own counsel with the object of inducing him to take a course inconsistent with duty and honour it would be impossible to conceive. There is no counsel in England who, in such circumstances, would consent to go on with the case. I must apologize to the Attorney General for making the hypothesis that he knew, as he ought to have been informed, of the existence of that letter and of the character of Pigott. Upon that hypothesis, what was clearly the duty of the Attorney General, or what was the duty of any Public Prosecutor or even of a junior counsel under such circumstances? His duty was to cause inquiries to be made into the character of this man; to test him in every way; to send persons to Paris to sift his story. In point of fact, when you have the principal witness in a case of this kind so shaken by his own testimony as Pigott was, before you produce him you should test his character and see whether he is a witness deserving of belief. That was obviously the duty of anybody charged with a prosecution of this character. If the Attorney General tells me—and I shall be glad to hear him say it—that up to the day he put Pigott into the box he had not heard a word breathed against his character, that would remove the whole of this impression. I could only then marvel that the Attorney General, surrounded by men of every kind from Ireland, having the advantage of junior counsel from Dublin, of Mr. Bolton, the Crown Solicitor, and of Mr. Houston, of the Loyal and Patriotic Union, was not informed. Why, there was not a man from Dublin in that Court who did not know the notorious fact of the infamy of Pigott. If the Attorney General did not know that Pigott was a man not to be relied upon, he was the only man in the Court who did not know it. Mr. Soames knew of Pigott at a very early period, and it is material to know when he informed the Attorney General of what he knew of Pigott. Mr. Soames was asked upon that subject—

> "Did you, when you heard what the character of Pigott was, a few days after the O'Donnell v. Walter trial, communicate the information to your counsel?"

The answer was a very remarkable one, because the O'Donnell and Walter trial was over, and there was no reason why the information should not have been communicated, especially to the Attorney General. The answer of Mr. Soames was—

> "I do not think I had any counsel at that time until after the Commission was appointed.' 'When did you first communicate with counsel?' 'I cannot tell; I do not know.' 'Did you not, immediately after the trial of the O'Donnell and Walter case?' 'My recollection is that I had no communication with counsel at all after the trial of the O'Donnell and Walter case, until after the Bill for the Special Commission had been passed!'"

But although this information could not be obtained from Mr. Soames, I am sure we shall have it from the Attorney General. The question is—and I am sure the Attorney General will not think it an unfair question—Did he know that this case rested upon Pigott before the Bill appointing the Special Commission passed through this House, and did he directly or indirectly advise the Government or communicate with the Government upon this subject in the interval between July, when his engagement in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter" was over, and before his engagement on the Commission began? As I said before, I apologize to the Attorney General for even making the suggestion; but if he knew that Pigott was a man not to be relied upon even after the letter of November, I should have thought that any counsel having a case with such terrible consequences depending upon such a witness as Pigott, and not being satisfied with him, would at once have gone to the accused and to the Court, and said, "I have been misinformed; I have been misinstructed; I thought that this was a good and solid charge; but, finding that the witness is not to be depended upon, as a public duty I withdraw the charge against the accused." If the Attorney General, knowing that Pigott was a man not to be relied upon and not having inquired into his character, kept this charge going for months, postponed producing the letters until the latest possible moment, and piled up every item of prejudice against Mr. Parnell under every other charge, it was a course which could only have the effect of weakening the testimony of Mr. Parnell, and of tending, if possible, to accredit the evidence of Pigott. What would then have been the course that would have been pursued? Doubting Pigott, and being informed that he was an infamous man unworthy of belief, the Attorney General could not have put an expert into the box to prove the letters, hoping that they would sustain the evidence of such a man. That is why I want an answer to these question, and I therefore hope the Attorney General will be able to tell us that information with reference to the character of Pigott never came to his knowledge. There is another matter almost as material, because it bears both upon the source from which the *Times* got the letters and upon the credibility of Pigott himself; and that is, was the Attorney General ever informed, and when, that Houston had burned Pigott's correspondence? Why did Houston burn Pigott's correspondence? He pretended to believe that the letters of Pigott were genuine. Why, then, should he be afraid that his relations with Pigott should be revealed? That correspondence, unless I am mistaken, was burnt when it became evident and apparent that Pigott would have to be called. Quite apart, then, from the letters of November, if Pigott himself had not written to tell what his character was, it was impossible to have circumstances of greater suspicion than that Houston bought the letters, took them to the *Times*, and then burnt the correspondence. It was like piling Pelion on Ossa. There was every possible accumulation of circumstance in the mind of every man who was acquainted with the facts of the case to convince him that the evidence of Pigott could not be relied upon. It is certain that the Public Prosecutor in this country, knowing such suspicions attached to Pigott, having taken no pains to inquire into his character, could not have put such a witness as that into the box to swear away the character of a fellow-Member of the House of Commons and the Leader of the Irish Party and have avouched him before the Court as a witness of truth. If Pigott, as a tainted witness, had been put into the box for what he was worth, it would have been a different thing, because the Court is informed when witnesses of bad character are put into the box. Otherwise, what would be the chance of an innocent man, if a witness was put into the box upon the assumption that the accused might not have the means of proving that the witness's evidence was not to be relied upon? I have to apologize to the House for the time I have occupied. For many months the great question in this country has been, "Did Mr. Parnell write the letter which was published in the *Times?*" Well, that question has been answered. We know, and everybody knows, that Mr. Parnell did not write that letter. Since that another question has arisen which has attracted and commanded equal interest, and that is, "Did Her Majesty's Attorney General know the character of Richard Pigott before he put him into the box?" Well, Sir, I think that this is a question which I have a right to ask, and the Attorney General will be the last man in the world to complain that I have afforded him an opportunity of answering it. I hope I have conveyed it in no offensive or disrespectful language. I have endeavoured to avoid doing so. Subject to what I have no doubt will be the satisfactory explanation which the Attorney General will give, I cannot help that there are many men in this House, and many more in the country, who hold the opinion that it is to be regretted and condemned that the Attorney General should ever have been connected with this case. I decline, however, to join in the imputations cast upon the Attorney General for the mean, contemptible, and disgraceful apology which was offered by the *Times* in Court to the hon. Member for Cork. I know that that did not proceed from the head or the heart of the Attorney General. That outrage upon good sense and good feeling must have been the handiwork of some pettifogging and cozening knave who, having endeavoured to inflict upon a man a mortal injury, had not the manliness to make a reparation corresponding to the offence. I acquit the Attorney General of any art or part in that miserable business. I believe he was the reluctant mouthpiece of a reparation, if possible, more discreditable than the offence. I am sure the Attorney General, if for nothing else, will thank me for affording him an opportunity in this House

—in this Assembly of Gentlemen—of making to his fellow-Member the representative for Cork and the Leader of the Irish people a reparation more adequate than that—a reparation worthy of Her Majesty's Attorney General and of himself.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Mr. Courtney, the Committee have listened for upwards of an hour and a half to that which must be regarded as a grave indictment against my conduct, and against the conduct of those associated with me; and yet, if it were not for the duty I owe to those who have trusted me through good report and through ill report, I think I should be disposed to leave the charges brought by the right hon. Gentleman almost without a single word in reply. ["Oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway need not be afraid; I do not expect even courteous treatment from them. [Mr. T. M. HEALY:—Nor have you any right to it.] [Another Irish MEMBER: You do not deserve it.] They will, however, hear from me a most distinct reply upon every single point that the right hon. Gentleman has mentioned. The right hon. Gentleman began by stating that I should be glad and thankful to him for the opportunity of making a statement to the House. If the right hon. Gentleman had ventured to repeat in the House the charges he has made outside the House, I should have been glad of the opportunity of replying to him. I will admit, that though couched in courteous language, and I believe with every consideration for my feelings in the matter, he has brought across this Table very grave and serious charges against me in the latter part of his speech. But I must say this—that when a right hon. Gentleman in the position of him who has just sat down thinks fit to make charges in the most public manner, imputing to me conduct even worse than that which he has imputed to me to-night, I should, at least, have an opportunity, and I propose to avail myself of the opportunity, of denying and repudiating those charges, and of telling the exact facts with reference to the charges which the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to make both inside and outside the House. I can accept none of the compliments which the right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to pay me. If I were capable of the conduct he has last imputed to me, all I can say is that I should be a disgrace to the Bar of England, and I absolutely decline to conduct this discussion upon the basis suggested by the right hon. Gentleman, who tried to cover me with compliments in the earlier part of his speech, and then made insinuations against my conduct at the close of it. I believe the right hon. Gentleman wishes me to deal with the substance of the charges, and not to consider for a moment the expressions of friendship he has used towards me, or whether there is any motive for having made them. I must occupy some considerable time, and I believe there are many in this House who think I ought to do so. I shall not spare myself from making my explanation perfectly full and distinct; but I repudiate absolutely and entirely the position which has been thrust upon me, which has been made the basis of the argument of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) when he says I have appeared in this Commission as the representative of Her Majesty's Government. I have appeared in this Commission, as I appeared in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter," as the private counsel for the *Times*. Whether I was right or wrong in assuming that position is a question which, for the present purpose, is immaterial. I am free to admit—and I say it with perfect candour—that I can well imagine that after the considerable length of time this case has taken there may be a question as to whether or not, from a personal point of view, it was a prudent thing to do; but my conduct is to be judged in the position which I will prove I have assumed, and which I occupied from the beginning to the end—namely, that of private counsel for the *Times*. I appeared, as the Attorney General is entitled to appear, upon instructions given him in any case in which he thinks fit to accept a retainer. It was necessary for the right hon. Gentleman to assume that the only matter to be discussed, either in "O'Donnell v. Walter" or in the case before the Commission, was the question of the genuineness of the facsimile letters. It was essential to his argument that he should assume that. For, as I will point out, when I come to the gravamen of the charge, it is only by assuming that that was the only fact to be investigated that he could possibly support some of the very serious allegations he has thought fit to make against me. The right hon. Gentleman knows as well as anybody that to a great extent my mouth upon every other part of this case is closed. He knows perfectly well that these charges, whether they are grave or slight, have to be examined. I think it was a little unfair—but of that I leave the House to judge—of the right hon. Gentleman to make such insinuations against me across the floor of this House; and I hope the House will pardon me if in repelling them, I do so with some warmth. Probably my speech last July, though it did put an end for the time to the charges brought against me, may have been delivered with such an effort to avoid any appearance of feeling that many thought I did not care about these charges; but I do not think anybody can expect me to deal with this matter without showing that I do feel them. Across the floor of this House the right hon. Gentleman said that, knowing I could not support the forged letter, knowing I could not make that good. I spent weeks and months——

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan): Hear, hear!

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member for Cavan cannot restrain himself, I shall have to invite him to retire.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman said that, knowing the letter could not be supported, I occupied weeks and months in piling up every item of prejudice in order that the character of the hon. Member for Cork might be discredited.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I only said that upon the hypothesis that the Attorney General knew the character of Pigott.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman must make no mistake, and I state it now in order that the House may have the exact facts. I knew of the letter of the 11th of November, which contains the most damaging statement of Pigott, about the middle of the month of December, and I will argue what was my position. The right hon. Gentleman was cheered by hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, and their cheers showed that they understood that he charged me with having availed myself of my position to pile up every item of prejudice—not to deal with the merits of the case, or to inquire into the issues which had to be tried—but to pile up prejudice in the hope of supporting a letter which I knew to be forged. That is the indictment which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has levelled against me—one whom he says he regards as his friend, one whom he has known for a long time, and one who has at present the advantage of representing a profession of which the right hon. Gentleman was once a member. Let the House remember not by listening to my language, but to the language of the Chief Justice of England, what are the charges which are still *sub judice*, as to which my mouth is closed, as to which I cannot express a shadow of an opinion, because I am only counsel in the case. But when it is said I was piling up prejudice in order to support a forged letter, are there some on that Bench who will hold that opinion when they hear the words of the Chief Justice in regard to the charges which are *sub judice?* The Chief Justice said—

> "They are accused frankly and plainly of abominable crime, not so much, perhaps, of having been guilty by their own hands, but of having lent themselves to a system which must necessarily be accompanied with crime, and of having personal knowledge of many of the crimes which accompany it. This is in substance what is charged against a number of persons whose names appear in these articles."

There is no one listening to me who does not know that, grave as was the accusation in connection with the alleged facsimile letter of the 15th of May, 1882, equally grave, in so far as the bulk of the hon. Members below the Gangway are concerned, were some of the other charges which were brought; and yet, forsooth, the right hon. Gentleman, who is so desirous of disarming me by soft words and compliments, who apologizes in the course of his speech for venturing to put a question to me, although he knew perfectly well what the answer would be to that question, thinks fit to accuse me across the floor of this House of piling up items of prejudice without adducing facts with reference to a case which is still *sub judice*, in order to eke out a case which I knew to be false. Mr. Courtney, I leave to the judgment—not of hon. Members below the Gangway, but to any honourable man in this House—["Order!" *and* "Withdraw!" *from the Home Rule Benches.*]

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! It is my duty to interrupt the hon. and learned Member. He is clearly out of order in discriminating between Members of this House.

*SIR R. WEBSTER again rose, and was greeted with loud cries from the Home Rule Members of "Withdraw!"

THE CHAIRMAN: I must call upon the hon. Member for South Mayo to retire. [*Home Rule cries of* "Don't retire! don't go!"]

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): Mr. Courtney, I did not open my lips.

An hon. MEMBER: The hon. Member for South Mayo has been grossly maligned.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: I repeat, Mr. Courtney, that I did not open my lips.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland Div.): I rise to a point of order.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member for South Mayo has been so grossly disorderly that, in fulfilment of the powers vested in me, I order him to retire.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: But, Mr. Courtney, I did not open my lips.

THE CHAIRMAN: I order the hon. Member to retire. [*Home Rule cries of* "Don't go!"]

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Mr. Courtney, I wish to ask a question upon a point of order. You have charged an hon. Member with disorderly conduct by interruption, and when that Member pledges his word to you and to the House that he never opened his lips, you are going to put the lie upon him before the House—["Order!"]—and, without investigation or opportunity to the hon. Member of making out his case, you hold him guilty of the charge he denies.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kerry, S.): I was sitting beside the hon. Member for South Mayo, and I can positively assure you, Mr. Courtney, that he never opened his lips.

THE CHAIRMAN: I accept the disclaimer. I think the hon. Member will not disclaim having repeatedly interrupted in a very loud voice, and I warn him not to do so again.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: I must disclaim it. You have put upon me a charge of disorder which you are perfectly unjustified in making.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have accepted the hon. Member's disclaimer.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): But you have repeated the charge.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have accepted the hon. Member's disclaimer in respect of this specific interruption. But does the hon. Member disclaim having interrupted before?

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: I repudiate it. I think you are treating me very unfairly.

An HON. MEMBER: It is monstrous.

SIR R. WEBSTER again rose, but was interrupted by

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR, who said: I rise to a point of order.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: In withdrawing the charge against me, Sir, you repeated it again, and I say you have acted unjustly in doing so.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member can scarcely have understood me. I accepted his dislaimer of having interrupted in a disorderly manner in this case. I am, however, under the impression, having observed him frequently during this debate, that he has interrupted it on various occasions in a disorderly manner. If he makes a disclaimer of these interruptions, I shall accept that disclaimer also. But I did not understand that at present the hon. Member has disclaimed previous interruptions.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: I can assure you that I have not committed any interruption whatever beyond ordinary cheering. [*Cries of* "Withdraw, Mr. Courtney."]

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I accept that statement.

SIR R. WEBSTER, resuming his speech: I unconditionally withdraw those words in which I unintentionally made a distinction between Members sitting on one side and on the other. I ask you kindly to allow me to point out that I was misunderstood. I was merely mentioning the fact that my observations would not meet with the concurrence of some hon. Members opposite. But I ventured to appeal to hon. Members sitting in other parts of the House whether the right hon. Member for Derby, in making that charge, justified it by one single fact? Did he adduce one single fact in support of the statement that I had availed myself of the opportunity of piling up mountains of prejudice in order to eke out a case which I knew must fail? He asks me whether or not I advised the Government at any stage since the trial of "O'Donnell v. Walter." If he asks a general question, whether I have given advice to the Government upon any point, I absolutely decline to answer, and no one knows better than the right hon. Gentleman that I could not answer that question. But if the right hon. Gentleman means to repeat in this House the charge which he made upon the platform, and which I understand to be the gravamen of the attack which he makes upon me, I have no hesitation in answering him. He stated at Derby, on the 27th February, that I had vouched the authenticity of the letters to the Government, and that if I had not vouched the authenticity of these letters there would have been no Commission at all. I suppose that is the charge which the right hon. Gentleman means to make to-night. For that charge there is not the slightest foundation.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What I meant by that was this. I read the hon. and learned Gentleman's statement in the House of Commons, and the passage in his speech in "O'Donnell v. Walter" which is actually part of the indictment, and I explained that this was what was offered, and what I understood to be a voucher for the truth of the evidence.

*SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman's memory misleads him. He gave no explanation of any sort or kind. I have the note of the speech before. He me asserted that I had vouched the authenticity of the letters to the Government, and that if I had not vouched it there would have been no Commission. The right hon. Gentleman says so now.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Hear, hear! I do say so now.

SIR RICHARD WEBSTER: Now, for that accusation or charge there is not a shadow of foundation. If the right hon. Gentleman had not forgotten every one of those traditions of which he said so much, and with respect to which he has suggested that I have disgraced my position as Attorney General, all I can say is that he knows as well as anybody that no counsel, whether he represents the Government or a private client, has any right to vouch his private opinion with regard to what he is going to prove in evidence. If he did so, he would be a disgrace to the profession. And if the right hon. Gentleman speaks again, I challenge him to deny that if I had vouched the truth of the evidence in the sense which he meant his hearers at Derby to understand I should have been guilty of grave misconduct, which would have justified the profession in expressing an opinion of me very different from what, I believe, most of them hold at present. Anybody with the most elementary knowledge of the position of English counsel would know that what I meant was that I meant to bring evidence in support of my statements. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to repeat across the floor of this House the charge that I induced Her Majesty's Government to pass the Bill for the Special Commission by vouching for the authenticity of the letters and that I pledged my own personal belief, then all I have to say is that there is not the slightest foundation for the statement. He says that he will accept my repudiation, but I wish distinctly to put the matter right. Since the time that I have been counsel in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter" no single word has escaped my lips as expressing my own personal opinion or belief on any single issue arising in the case. Let us deal with the next matter. The right hon. Gentleman asks me whether I asked the assent of the Government to my being employed. Does he forget what actually happened in this House? I was employed in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter," and when it was announced that I was employed, Mr. O'Donnell wrote a letter to the First Lord of the Treasury to ask whether my right hon. Friend considered it right that I should be retained. A similar question was asked in the House, and the First Lord of the Treasury replied that the Government had no right to interfere. Let us see what is the next allegation. It is put in the shape of a question, whether, in whatever capacity I acted, I ought not personally to satisfy myself to my own belief of the accuracy of the statements which were going to be produced in evidence by witnesses? A more monstrous proposition has never been suggested by anybody who knows the position of counsel in England. I say that that is a monstrous proposition, and would never be suggested by anybody who knows anything of the position of counsel at the English Bar. There is not a barrister who has practised at Quarter Sessions six months or a magistrate in this House who does not know perfectly well that not only does counsel not so satisfy himself, but if he were to endeavour to satisfy himself of the credibility of the witnesses except by the papers before him, he would be guilty of gross irregularity. If the right hon. Gentleman, at the time he practised with great success in the Golden Gallery upstairs, had been charged by any counsel with having failed to satisfy himself of the truth of the story which a witness was going to tell him he would have repudiated the obligation with the greatest indignation.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I took great care to draw a very broad distinction between the conduct of civil cases and criminal prosecutions.

Sir R. WEBSTER: There is no such distinction. We are not talking of matters which we do not understand; we are not talking of matters which are not well understood by many Members of this House. I say there is no distinction between the duties of counsel, except this—that counsel ought to make a perfectly full disclosure to the Court of everything which has been communicated to him. But that is not the charge which the right hon. Gentleman really brought against me. Has he forgotten what he said in the debate two nights ago, and what he also said at Derby? Let me digress for a moment to remind the House of the mode of warfare of the right hon. Gentleman. On public platforms—carried away, I hope, by the excitement of the moment—he makes charges of a more direct and much graver character than those he makes in this House, when he wants to make a charge and when he hopes it will go into a certain section of the Press, which is only too glad to turn suggestions into charges. Those who have studied the Press during the last two or three weeks know perfectly well what has happened. What does the right hon. Gentleman do? He gets up in this House and makes his charge in the form of a question. I think I should like, if I were entitled to cross-examine the right hon. Gentleman, to ask him where he got the authority for some of the suggestions which, in the form of questions, were thrown across the floor of the House? Let me give the Committee one instance; and I will ask the Committee to consider what just right I have to complain of the insinuations? The right hon. Gentleman referred the night before last to communications made by officials in order to obtain information of certain facts, and he quoted, I hope and believe by inadvertence, an answer of mine, and stated that every communication by Mr. Soames to officials was made at my request. I corrected him at the time. What did he go on to ask? "Did Pigott see Daly on the suggestion of the Attorney General? Now we know the character of the man Pigott." [*Home Rule cheers.*] The more you cheer that reference to the character of Pigott, the more grossly unjust is the insinuation made by the right hon. Gentleman. What did he mean when, two nights ago, he put this question to me, "Did Pigott see Daly at the suggestion of the Attorney General?" Has he any warrant for that suggestion? Has any libeller or anonymous correspondent, by letter or by telegram, given him any justification for the suggestion that I had said a single word about Pigott seeing Daly? I cannot imagine a much graver charge can be made against me than that I have gone out of my way as counsel to endeavour to obtain evidence from Daly, and that I have employed an agent who, according to the right hon. Gentleman, to my knowledge was infamous, in order to pay a visit to this man in prison. I say this—that no gentleman, be he right honourable or honourable, has the right to make a charge in the shape of a question, and to insinuate an accusation in the shape of a question, and not be able to say he had no warrant for so doing. Why, what did he say in the next breath? He turned round to hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway, always ready to cheer him, and asked—

> "Why did Pigott go to Daly? He went for the purpose of getting Daly to swear away the character of the hon. Member for Cork."

If hon. Members below the Gangway cheer that suggestion, how disgraceful is the insinuation made against me by the right hon. Gentleman that I employed Pigott to see Daly for the purpose of inducing him to be guilty of such infamous conduct. I will repeat fully the denial I have already made in the House with reference to this matter; I never heard of Pigott's visit to Daly, or anything connected with it, till I heard it mentioned across the floor of this House, to my surprise. I apologize to the Committee for the length of my remarks, but it shall not be said I have wittingly passed by one of the accusations made by the right hon. Gentleman. He has now stated that I have been guilty of misconduct of a somewhat gross character, or that I took the accused by surprise and so conducted this case as to have been guilty of such conduct as no barrister, no Attorney General, ought to be guilty of without meeting with the censure of this House. Has he read the proceedings before the Commission? Has he followed them? And, if so, does he not know that what he says is as direct an attack upon the Court as can be made? What has happened in this case? The persons charged have been represented by counsel as able as any practising at the Bar. Very early in the case the question of giving the names of witnesses arose, and I stated —for reasons that I am prepared to justify—that, having regard to my instructions as to the intimidation practised upon witnesses, I should decline to give the names. The Committee will scarcely believe from what has happened that that position taken up by me in the ordinary way as counsel was accepted by the Court as being a perfectly proper proceeding, and in order to prevent any injustice being done the Court told the counsel for the accused that if on any occasion they desired it, the witnesses should be detained, and that the cross-examination should be postponed. In several instances that was done; and in more cases than one time has been given for inquiries to be made. This charge, however, is not made against me really; I am afraid it is made in order to discredit the character of the tribunal; at any rate I can scarcely conceive of any other motive. I assert that what I have done in this matter has been done in the light of day, with the sanction of the Commission, and subject to any complaint which the learned counsel for the accused might make against me. The House will judge whether I have given a sufficient answer to the charge which the right hon. Gentleman made against me. The next matter which the right hon. Gentleman insinuated rather than stated was that I had something to do with the solicitors' clerks going into gaols and swearing prisoners. I pass no censure on persons who had to do with getting up the case. It must be remembered that every one of these matters can be investigated. The question of swearing witnesses came up in connection with that wretched man Pigott, and the President of the Commission said he could understand that additional solemnity would attach to a statement by the witness if it were vouched by an oath. The charge made against me is that I had something to do with it; but I had no more to do with it than the right hon. Gentleman himself. The statements were produced in writing, and were subject to the cross-examination of witnesses, as to the manner in which they had been obtained. If this charge is thought to require any denial from me, I give it an absolute denial, and I shall be much surprised if any hon. Member again suggests that in this respect there was anything reprehensible in my conduct. I have dealt with the general charges brought against me, except the very grave one—that I have been guilty of conduct which, as stated in another place, has disgraced the Bar of England, such as was never witnessed in a Court of Justice before, when he said that, although I knew Pigott was a witness not entitled to credit, I subsequently called him as a witness.

Sir W. HARCOURT: As a witness of truth.

*Sir R WEBSTER: I do not understand what is meant by a witness of truth; every witness is *primâ facie* a witness of truth. I understand making an absolute and full disclosure of the evidence in the possession of counsel. This may be a matter on which the House may expect to hear from me an explanation of great fulness; and, as I take a view absolutely different from that of the right hon. Gentleman, I should like the House to understand the position in which I stand. If I had not put Pigott into the box after the statement I had made on behalf of my clients, I should have been guilty of contemptible conduct. No counsel standing in my position—and here I speak not only for myself, but also for these five gentlemen associated with me, two of them distinguished Members of the Irish Bar—no counsel in my position or in theirs would be worthy to take a brief in a case if, having stated he would make a full disclosure, he hesitated to put a witness into the box simply because that witness, when he was cross-examined, might possibly not prove to be as respectable a man as was at first supposed. Let us have no beating about the bush in this matter. This language was used at Ealing—"The Attorney General knew that that infamous charge was one which could not be supported." If the right hon. Gentleman is not accurately reported——

SIR W. HARCOURT: I never said so. The report of my speech at Ealing, as the Attorney General knows, was a very short one, and, I have no doubt, incorrect. I have never said, publicly or privately, of the Attorney General that I blamed him in this matter, except on the hypothesis that he knew and believed Pigott not to be a witness of truth when he put him in the witness-box.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I accept, of course, the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that he was incorrectly reported; but it is a little unfortunate for the individual who is now addressing the Committee that this disclaimer of a most distinct charge should not have come before to-night. What is the language of the right hon. Gentleman now? His only charge is that, if I knew and believed Pigott was a man of infamous character, I should not have put him in the box. And then he goes on, in his speech, to say that he hopes I did not know of the letter of the 15th of November, because, if I did know of that letter, I must have known that Pigott was a man of infamous character; and, if I knew Pigott to have been a man of infamous character from that letter, then my conduct was a discredit and a disgrace because I did put him in the box. I do not believe the Committee will think I have stated the right hon. Gentleman's accusations unfairly now. I told the Committee a few minutes ago that I knew of that letter about the middle of December, not having had it furnished to me before because the pressure of other work was such that I had not devoted my particular attention to that part of the case until after the middle of December. Let the Committee just understand exactly what was the real state of facts with respect to the matter. The right hon. Gentleman has thought fit to assume that before Pigott was put into the box he had admitted that the allegation that the letters were genuine was one which could not be supported—that he had admitted that he was a man of infamous character, and that for that reason I knew from the information conveyed to me that the charge was unfounded. Mr. Courtney, there is not one shadow of a foundation for any one of those statements. The Committee will understand—and I ask them to follow each date—that when I opened the case before the Commission I stated that I would undertake to put into the box every witness, so far as I could, who had anything to do with the production of the letters, and if I had retreated from that statement the hon. Member for Cork and hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway could have brought a most serious charge against me. On the 19th of October—the Commission beginning, I think, on the 22nd—Pigott made a statement which will be found set out verbatim in the proceedings, page 3,252, that all the letters were genuine. I am not going to refer to the details, but he stated distinctly that all the letters were genuine. I never heard Pigott's name or Houston's name in connection with those letters until that statement was shown to me by Mr. Soames on the Monday following the 19th of October. The right hon. Gentleman will please remember this has been already proved on oath—I am not making any fresh statement at all—this was sworn in the box by Mr. Soames, who said that he remembered the statement being brought to me, because certain blue pencil-marks on the statement were mine, and those were placed there when he took the statement across to me on the Monday after Pigott had made it. On the 7th of November Pigott made a statutory declaration upon oath, in which he repeated that all the letters were genuine. Then he made the statement —I must read the exact language—in a letter which it is supposed ought to have justified me in keeping Pigott out of the box. I will ask the Committee just to follow me, because this is the statement which the right hon. Gentleman says is an admission by Pigott that he was an infamous witness, and ought not to be put in the box. Pigott said in his letter—

> "In such circumstances, if I have to appear—that is, the *Times* compels me to come forward—I can only repeat that I will do so unwillingly, and with the feeling strong within me that I have been unfairly dealt with."

Mind, the *Times* had the written statement signed by him, and the sworn statement that the letters were genuine.

> "And I would also again warn them of the grave consequences to myself which I have already indicated to you that are certain to follow my appearance in the witness-box. But, above and before all, I would impress upon them that it is my settled conviction that, should I have to appear, the cross-examination would most certainly tend to discredit my evidence in chief."

[*Cheers.*] It is all very well to cheer; but is there any barrister in this House who would venture to say that, having pledged the word of his client to the tribunal that he would produce the witness, he would be justified in saying he would not call him, because the man himself had said his evidence might be discredited? But will the Committee just follow me as to what the real statement was?

> "It must of necessity do so, as I feel utterly unable, from defect of memory and other causes, to refute satisfactorily the many allegations founded on remote events of my career as a National journalist that are now certain to be brought up in judgment against me."

What has Pigott's career as a National journalist to do with the matter? It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to toss his head in disdain. He says he knew more about Pigott than I did. I think it is very likely indeed. But what has the career of Pigott as a National journalist to do with the fact I desired to call him for? I say again—I apologize for repeating it—that when the right hon. Gentleman is suggesting that that is an admission that Pigott was an infamous witness, that statement is so absurd that the Committee ought to have the matter clearly before it. If, Pigott having sworn to a statement that these letter were genuine, I had declined to put him in the box because I was afraid of his cross-examination, I should be utterly undeserving of ever being trusted by either a private or public client with a brief.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That was not the point I took. I said in a criminal prosecution, when a prosecutor produces a witness whom he has reason to believe to be a tainted witness, he ought to inform the Court and the accused. I stated at the time that that was done in the case of an informer.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: That is not the *gravamen* of the charge against me, but if it is, it will recoil on the right hon. Gentleman in a few moments. The charge made on public platforms, and in this House, against me is this. It was said to-night, a few moments ago, in my hearing, that Pigott had admitted that he was an infamous witness, and, knowing that, I did not withdraw the charge, but went on examining him. It is alleged that, knowing and believing him to be an infamous witness, by this letter, I still vouched for his truth. That was the charge laid against me. It is not a question of misleading the Court. But when the right hon. Gentleman throws his mud about, hoping that some of it will stick, and that what does not stick will be represented in certain sections of the National Press as sticking, I think he should be a little more careful of his facts. Now, will the Committee listen to this statement of simple dates? I have told the House that I knew of this letter in the middle of December. Before Pigott went into the box—five days before—I put that letter into the hands of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney. So if it was desirable that the other side should know—if they ought to have known—that that man's character was discredited, I myself had given them that information. [*Cheers and cries of* "Withdraw."] Hon. Members who have cheered me do not want the charges withdrawn. They have been refuted by evidence which cannot be disputed. In the course of Mr. Soames's evidence, which was given some days before the 20th of February, the letter was called for, and I produced it, and handed it to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney, before Pigott went into the box, on February 20th. It appears on page 3,044.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Two months afterwards.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman says two months afterwards. The accusation made against me a moment ago was that I did not let the other side know that Pigott was a tainted witness. It was not a question when I found it out, but that I called him, without letting the other side know. Will the Committee believe that, having handed the letter to my hon. and learned Friend who was conducting the case against me, wishing it to be read, he asked that it might not be read until Pigott went into the box! [Sir W. HARCOURT: That is not the point.] I hear the right hon. Gentleman say I do not appreciate the charge. The first charge made against me was that though I knew Pigott to be an infamous witness I put him into the box. Hon. Members must pardon me. I have shown by the letter itself that there is no statement approaching the assertion that he was an infamous witness. There is nothing like it. The only suggestion was that the early events of his career as a Nationalist journalist might do him harm. Then the right hon. Gentleman says I put him into the box without letting the other side know he was an infamous witness, and then, when I have shown that I had given the same materials as I had on this particular point to the other side the right hon. Gentleman says I do not appreciate the charge. I do not know whether I appreciate the charge, but I think the Committee appreciates the charge, and I hope there are some Members of the House who appreciate my statement. I am entitled to ask the right hon. Gentleman—it is only common justice to me—that he should not dispute my statement of facts, and if he believes I am not accurate, I am perfectly prepared to give him chapter and verse for every statement I have made. I cannot close the observations I have to make to-night on this matter without expressing my surprise —I had almost said my contempt, but I will say my surprise—that anybody could make a charge against a man who is not in this House, and cannot answer in this House, such as has been made by the right hon. Gentleman against Mr. Soames. I am not speaking as counsel for Mr. Soames; but I do ask those who say they love justice in this country just to remember the position of Mr. Soames. He is not in this House, and cannot answer for himself. [An hon. MEMBER: He is in the gallery.] Mr. Soames has been four or five times in the box, and he has expressed his willingness to give every information no oath as to the way in which the evidence was obtained, and he did state voluntarily that he would prove the whole story as to his connection with Pigott and Houston, and he submitted himself for cross-examination. An hon. Gentleman below the Gangway the other night thought fit to say—we can understand his motive—that he would not believe Mr. Soames upon his oath. That was a specimen of the delicate and refined language to which we have been accustomed in this matter. But the right hon. Gentleman to-night, whose position is one of more authority, but not of more responsibility, says that Mr. Soames is a gentleman who ought to be struck off the rolls.

SIR W. HARCOURT: If he did not inform you.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman cannot get out of the dilemma in that way. He tried to suggest, before I got up, that in order to save my own skin I would say that I never knew of the letter before I put Pigott into the box, and then he would be able to make an accusation with great foundation against the solicitor for the *Times*. Why, the *gravamen* of the charge is that Mr. Soames and I, and everybody else connected with the matter, knew that Pigott was a man of infamous character, and vouched him as the witness of truth. [An hon. MEMBER: "Everybody knew."] Everybody knew says an hon. Member below the Gangway. Then I suppose the hon. Member for Northampton knew it. That, Mr. Courtney, may possibly account for certain negotiations connected with the case. I must apologize to the Committee for detaining it, but I referred to insinuations made upon absolutely no foundation by the right hon. Gentleman—insinuations which I really believe in his calmer moments he will regret that he has made. Now, what is the other insinuation he has made against me to-night, unwarranted, and without a shadow of foundation? I will give my answer to him in a moment. He thought fit to ask me this question across the floor of the House, nearly two years after the facsimile letter had appeared, for the purpose, I suppose, of embarassing me by endeavouring to suggest that I was a party to some conspiracy about which we have heard so much, but of which at present we do not see much sign of proof. The right hon. Gentleman went out of his way to ask across the floor of this House whether I knew of the facsimile letter before it was published—whether I was consulted by the *Times* before it was published. Did he do that out of a desire that I should clear my character? Was he so burning with anxiety that I should clear myself from an accusation which ought never to have been made when he put that question? The Committee will not believe for a single instant that was the object. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me now who it is that suggested to him that I had seen this letter before it was published. I put this dilemma to him—either he had warrant for that and dared not give the name, or else he evolved it out of his inner consciousness for the purpose of endeavouring to suggest the accusation against me. What bearing has it on my conduct in the Commission, or what bearing has it on my conduct in "O'Donnell *v.* Walter?"

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will the Attorney General allow me? He is expressing a strong feeling and says I suggested an accusation against him in this matter. Why was the *Times* newspaper not to consult counsel before they took such a serious step as that of publishing that letter? I think if they did not, they acted even more rashly than I believe them to have done; and why should they not have consulted the Attorney General?

*SIR R. WEBSTER: Mr. Courtney, we have heard the explanation—a very convenient explanation, after I have made the suggestion. Will the right hon. Gentleman deny—I will not ask him to interrupt me though I put it interrogatively—that when that question was put across the floor of the House he meant to insinuate that I had vouched for the *Times* that these letters were genuine? I have made the statement before, and I will be allowed to make the statement again—and the right hon. Gentleman has been kind enough to say that notwithstanding the insinuations he still thinks that my word is entitled to some credit—that I never saw the facsimile letter that appeared in the *Times* or had anything to do with it; I never saw any of the other letters until I was shown them as counsel in "O'Donnell *v.* Walter," and I never had anything to do, directly or indirectly, with those letters except in conducting the case of "O'Donnell *v.* Walter" and in conducting the case before the Commission. That statement is sufficiently explicit—it is sufficiently distinct, and I trust and hope that the next time the right hon. Gentleman thinks fit to speak of me upon public platforms—though he may with pleasure, with my full consent use strong language: it does not hurt and does not injure me one bit—still I hope he will have the grace to suggest that some of the charges he had brought forward, some of the insinuations he has made, are without foundation. I do not think that I have missed any of the accusations brought against me by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen, except, perhaps, the last. I reserve it until I complete my statement upon the subject—to the closing observations I desire to make. Perhaps I ought to have noticed a somewhat curious comparison between my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney and myself, not to complain of the comparison made on the public platform, as I am quite willing to take it as fair adulation on the one side and fair criticism upon the other. But we are told that the hon. and learned Member for Hackney refused the brief because he was an Irishman. I do not think my hon. and learned Friend will be very grateful for the compliments showered upon him by the right hon. Gentleman to-night: however, that part of the subject is not of sufficient importance to justify me in detaining the Committee. But, to wind up, this was the statement made against me:—

> "I wish to give the Attorney General an opportunity of saying that he had nothing to do with the disgraceful apology of the *Times*, that it was an outrage on good sense and good feeling, and it was the work of a pettifogging and cozening knave."

Mr. Courtney, the pettifogging and cozening knave who is responsible for that apology stands before this House now. The pettifogging and cozening knave who wrote out that apology is the humble individual who has been making this statement, and if he had to do it again he would couch it as nearly as possible in the same words, for he believes that he went to the extremity of his duty, that if he erred at all he erred in acting upon a particular view of the case, and that the last Member who would complain of him in his calmer moments would be the hon. Member for Cork. But be that as it may—the right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well who the author was—do not let the right hon. Gentleman think that I am going to be frightened by the very elegant terms of abuse with which he has thought fit to bespatter persons who had to faithfully discharge a difficult and painful duty according to their belief—according to their sense of honour, and of what was due to their client's position. Do not let him think that the use of any such vulgar abuse would make me shrink for one moment from acknowledging in this House, or anywhere else, the part I have taken, and of which I am not ashamed. No, Sir; that is not the spirit which has actuated Members of that noble profession of which I am for the moment the humble representative. Whether they act wisely or whether they act unwisely, whether they do their duty to their clients or go beyond that duty, they are not in the habit of shielding themselves by denying their responsibility, but they are prepared to accept it to the full, conscious that they are simply performing their duty. To deny that responsibility would be conduct of which no honest man would be guilty. I do not know whether I can with any advantage occupy the time of the Committee longer. I will give the right hon. Gentleman one assurance. He said in the beginning of his speech that I must be glad of this opportunity, because for a number of weeks there had been paragraphs in the papers reflecting most gravely upon my conduct and my position. I think I should like to have asked him, if I was allowed to cross-examine him, who was the principal author of those charges? How many of them are merely re-echoes, in less polished but scarcely more offensive language than that used by the right hon. Gentleman at Derby and elsewhere? But I agree that the columns of *United Ireland*, the *Freeman's Journal* —and I am afraid I must say the *Star* —availed themselves of the opportunity of the lead given by the right hon. Gentleman to suggest that I was to be disbarred, and the Benchers ought to take me into consideration, that the Government ought at once to dismiss me to the ranks, and the House of Commons ought to hound me out of the place as a pettifogging and cozening knave. I do not think that even the *Star* arrived at that climax of expression. I think it was reserved for the right hon. Gentleman. I think that my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary will be almost jealous of me to-night, because some expressions have been used concerning me even more violent than have appeared in those papers with regard to him. I will give the right hon. Gentleman opposite this assurance, and the hon. Member below the Gangway who has something to do with one of these newspapers, that the charges have not occasioned me one single moment's anxiety, one single sleepless moment, or any other feeling except pity for the persons who are so capable of prostituting a position of political power for the purpose of bespattering one who offends them, but who was endeavouring, under somewhat difficult and trying circumstances, to do his duty, both as a member of the Bar and a Member of the House of Commons. But, Mr. Courtney, I will only say this in conclusion—that if the charges that are going to be brought against me on some future day are no worse than the charges which have been brought against me even on the public platform, and in the House of Commons, by the right hon. Gentleman this evening, I believe that what I have gone through in the course of the last four or five months, and the part which I have played, will not be by any means the least creditable part of my career.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland): Mr. Courtney, I think I can say why it is that the hon. and learned Gentleman has never been called a pettyfogging and cozening knave, and that is because until we had his own acknowledgment to-day no one thought him responsible for the apology that was offered to my hon. Friend the Member for Cork. Whether the hon. and learned Gentleman will escape from that title in future after what he has said is more than I can answer for. I must say I watched the Attorney General in the course of the trial before the Commissioners for many days and never appreciated his histrionic powers as I did to-night. I ventured to ask how he looked when Pigott was giving his evidence, and one of his learned colleagues said he looked holier than ever. The worse the case the more sanctimonious the right hon. Gentleman looked, and the graver the offence the more pious his appearance. Of all the things he has done in the course of the Commission Inquiry I do not know anything half so clever or half so dexterous as giving the letter of Pigott to the Member for South Hackney (Sir C. Russell), just five days before Pigott was called. The right hon. Gentleman was cognizant of the letter for two months and a half before, and during the whole of this period he never gave the smallest hint to the counsel for the defence, or to the public or the Press, of the existence of any such letter. Five days before Pigott was called his conscience awoke, and he gave the letter to the counsel for the defence. I will tell him and the Committee why he gave up the letter. He gave it because he could not avoid it. He did not give it from a sense of honour or fair play, but he gave it under the hard pressure of necessity and exposure. Why had not the right hon. Gentleman the candour to tell the Committee that the existence of the letter had been sworn to by one of his own witnesses when he gave it to the Member for South Hackney? I will sit down if the right hon. Gentleman can controvert my statement that the letter was not given to Sir C. Russell until after its existence had been sworn to in open court.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: Mr. Soames had, long before, in his evidence in chief, offered to produce every single scrap of writing that had passed between him and Mr. Pigott, and before one single question had been asked him by Sir C. Russell.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: That was not my point, and the hon. Gentleman is not so stupid as not to see it is not. My point is that the surrender of that letter, which the right hon. Gentleman gives as a proof of his sense of chivalry and honour, did not take place till the existence of the letter had been proved and revealed in open court, and until Sir C. Russell had called for it. And yet when I have thus exposed the real reason of the chivalry, honour, and fair play of the right hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding the exposure, he is looking as sanctimonious as ever. I think if the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby had done nothing but elicit from the lips of the Attorney General the two confessions—first, as to the authorship of the miserable apology, and, secondly, as to his knowledge of the existence of Pigott's letter in December — the debate would be fully justified, also the main charges brought against the hon. and learned Gentleman. The hon. and learned Gentleman saw in the middle of December this letter of Pigott, and yet he said he did not know that Pigott was infamous, and he had the face to tell us that the letter of Pigott did not acknowledge his infamy. Pigott wrote saying that he feared if he were placed in the box his political antecedents were such that his evidence would be broken down on cross-examination. There is another letter in which Pigott said—

> "I am bound to again warn them that my testimony will be so sensibly weakened in cross-examination as to seriously injure, instead of serving, their case."

What did Pigott do? He called attention to the fact that his career as a Nationalist journalist might be raked up. "What had I to do with that?" says the Attorney General, "and what had that to do with the facsimile letter?"—for he still calls it the facsimile letter, and refrains from using honourable and manly words when dealing with this foul and false charge. The "alleged facsimile letter," is his delicate phraseology for a thoroughly exposed, wicked, and malignant forgery. I will ask the Attorney General before this debate closes to have the manliness to stand up in his place and declare, without limitation and without circumlocution, that he now confesses that each and every one of the letters attributed to my hon. Friend by the *Times*, and supplied to them by Pigott, was a forgery, in order that the Prime Minister may be prevented from taking advantage of the lame apology—the intentionally lame apology—of the Attorney General, to give a new life to these wicked and horrible charges. What had Pigott's career as a Nationalist journalist to do with the letters? It had this to do with them. During that career he had been convicted in the public Press of Ireland of having committed the same offence. Take the notorious letter to Mr. Egan. Pigott wrote to Egan saying he had a certain document of a damaging character. He did not quite believe it himself, he said, but he was offered £500 to publish it, and he was so tempted by this offer that he was afraid he would have to publish the document, though he believed it to be false, and damaging to the Land League. This correspondence was published in the *Freeman's Journal,* and it exposed Pigott to the world as a blackmailer, a begging letter writer, and a forger. The forgeries of the *Times* and the forgeries with which Pigott threatened Egan were practically the same kind of trick, and yet the hon. and learned Gentleman, with his sanctimonious air, asked the House what had the antecedents of an Irish Nationalist journalist, a forger, and a blackmailer to do with the case of the forged letters in the *Times?* The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby would repudiate having cast any doubt on the justice of the Special Commission, but the Attorney General has himself cast an undeserved stigma on that tribunal. The Attorney General has sought to make the tribunal responsible for his own conduct, but which the Commission most emphatically condenmed. Does the hon. and learned Gentleman deny that the Court has been constantly fretting at his conduct of the case? Does he deny that the President asked him to advance with his case, that he over and over again signified that the hon. and learned Gentleman was very slow in coming to the point? He has sought also to make the President responsible for the withholding of the names of the witnesses. Can the hon. and learned Gentleman say that the President told him to withhold the information? The hon. and learned Member for Hackney protested constantly against the manner in which the Attorney General conducted his case, but the President said he could not interfere with the hon. and learned Gentleman in the matter. Then as to the information given to the defence. For two months the Attorney General allowed this charge to hang over the head of the hon. Member for Cork. Did the hon. and learned Gentleman believe the letters to be genuine; did he know them to be forgeries? Any one who took the trouble to inquire into the character of the blackmailer Pigott years before, and could still believe the *Times* letters genuine, must have been either very innocent or most dishonest. I charge the Attorney General with postponing the case of the letters. I watched the hon. and learned Gentleman very closely. Whenever there was a reference to the letters in Court an air of attention and expectation immediately took possession of every one present, there being a desire to get at the *gravamen* of the case. No one cared about the ancient history which was well known to the Tory Government when they were the allies of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, and when, through Lord Carnarvon, they were ready to hand over an Irish Parliament to him. On those occasions the Attorney General usually said that "he might be able to produce the letters next week," that "he would not enter into any engagement," but that "if he could produce them he would." The fact is that the Attorney General shirked bringing up the letters as long as he could; he did not bring them up one moment sooner than he was forced to do. Why? Because he did not believe in them. He has been convicted by his own conduct of treating my hon. Friend most unfairly, by allowing to hang over his head for months a charge of sympathy with murder long after it was known that that charge was a foul, vile, and discreditable calumny. What would have been the manly course for the hon. and learned Gentleman to have adopted? Why, he must have known or suspected that Pigott was a perjurer and forger, and he should have got up in Court, and said, "Since we have brought this charge against the hon. Member facts have come to our knowledge that make us now suspect that it is a vile and wicked invention." If the hon. and learned Gentleman had been engaged in a private case in which his vision was not obscured by professional considerations and political passion, I am sure he would have been the first to accept the canon hitherto accepted by all English gentlemen, that when one finds he has misrepresented another the apology he offers is in proportion to the offence he gave. The Attorney General's withdrawal of the charge should have come at the very first moment he was doubtful of its justice. This would have been the course taken by a man of honour, and I deny that there is one code of private honour and another code of professional honour. How, then, does the Attorney General explain the delay of months which took place, when he must have known the charges indicated by the letters were false? He says he was bound to put Pigott in the box. Yes; but he was also bound to have done so with a statement that he did not believe his evidence. But the hon. and learned Gentleman did not give the Court the smallest intimation that he did not accept every word of his testimony as gospel truth. He speaks of the five days' notice he gave, but at the same time he has not even alluded to the fact that he tried to put the experts into the box before Pigott was called; and not only did he try to put the experts into the box, but he actually did get one of them into the box, and it was only owing to an untoward circumstance in connection with one of his witnesses, and that in obedience to the pressure of the Court, which he resisted as long as he could, that he was compelled to go to the case of Pigott, and made to desist from still further bolstering this fabric of lies; and this is the chivalrous and generous Gentleman who absolutely went out of his way in the almost feverish eagerness of his desire to be fair to the defendants—this is the chivalrous and generous Gentleman who had to be almost kicked into going into the case about the letters. I will say nothing about Mr. Soames. I do not care a pin about Mr. Soames. If the *Times* newspaper retains his services as its solicitor it will never see another centenary, even if he lives to be as old as Methuselah. The hon. and learned Gentleman skipped very lightly over what I think the most serious part of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby's case—namely, his relation as Attorney General and also as a Member of the Government to the whole business. The Attorney General reminds me of a character in *The Mikado*, and ought to be called "Pooh-bah." Pooh-bah occupied several positions, for he was not only First Lord of the Treasury, but also Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord High Chamberlain, and I am not sure whether he was not likewise Secretary for the Colonies, and thus he could make application as Pooh-bah to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Lord High Chamberlain, while as Lord High Chamberlain he could make application as Pooh-bah to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In the same way we never seem to know when the the hon. and learned Gentleman is counsel for the *Times*, or when he resumes his character as Attorney General. Now, I am about to put a very plain question to the hon. and learned Gentleman. I will ask him, did he frame the reference to the tribunal which was to try the case in which he acted as counsel? Had he any part in framing the terms of the reference to the tribunal by which his own client was to be tried?

*SIR R. WEBSTER: None whatever.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: None whatever? Did he not attend when a Cabinet Council was about to take place at which the Commission Bill was to be considered?

*SIR R. WEBSTER: Never.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: Then I am sorry to say that the Tory organs are almost as inaccurate as the Attorney General. But I would ask him, did he never see the Bill before it was introduced to this House? Ah! what a blessing cross-examination is——

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I beg pardon. The hon. Gentleman may think the observation very clever, but I would remind him that I stated to the House last Session that I had seen the Bill before it was introduced, but that I had nothing to do with its preparation.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: The hon. and learned Gentleman says he saw the Bill; let me ask him, did any of the counsel for the defendants in the coming inquiry see the Bill? Nay, I will press the point a little further. Why did the Attorney General see the Bill? because honour and fair play ought to have kept that Bill as secret from the hon. and learned Gentleman as from anyone in the world. I wonder if the old friend of the First Lord of the Treasury also saw the Bill. Was my hon. Friend the Member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell), who was to be tried on a charge of participation in murder shown the Bill? Was the Bill shown to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney (Sir C. Russell)? Let the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General explain it as he will, I denounce it as a part of the foul partizanship of the Government that they allowed the chief counsel for one of the parties in this great State inquiry to see the terms of a Bill which was to establish a tribunal before which the parties were to appear, and offered no such facility to those who represented the other side. I would ask the hon. and learned Gentleman, who was it that chose the tribunal before which his client was to appear? Is it true that the chief counsel for the *Times* selected the tribunal which was to try the case? I demand an answer to this question, and I will sit down immediately if the hon. and learned Gentleman will give me an answer. Does he deny it? He does not deny it. He cannot deny it.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I protest, Sir, against this mode of addressing the House; and I appeal to those who are better acquainted with the House than I am. I say there is not a shadow of foundation for the suggestion just made; and I will add that I shall decline to notice any insinuations of this kind.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: I do not deal in insinuations, and will now put before the Committee some facts which the hon. and learned Member cannot deny. The Attorney General was asked by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney whether the Government intended to follow all the precedents in such cases, and to give the fullest opportunity for consultation with regard to the names to be selected. Will the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General deny that? Was he asked that question or was he not—aye or no? When the hon. and learned Gentleman was supposed to be pressing the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby very hard in the speech the hon. and learned Gentleman has just delivered, the whole of the cheering occupants of the Benches opposite shouted "Answer, answer"; but the Attorney General, when I ask him to answer, says neither "aye" nor "no." Well, what happened? The Attorney General told the hon. and learned Gentleman he would consult the First Lord of the Treasury——

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I must say that for these suggestions made by the hon. Gentleman there is not the slightest foundation. There is no foundation for the statement that any such communication was made to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney. The communication was as to whether the names were going to be put into the Bill before it was printed or not.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: That is exactly the point—were the names to be put into the Bill; and that meant, were the members of the Front Opposition Bench to have an opportunity of discussing the names. I tell the hon. and learned Gentleman he will not be able to wriggle out of this. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) made the statement that the leaders of the Front Bench on this side of the House had not been consulted with regard to the names. I will say nothing in reference to the learned Judges who have to try the case. So far as I can see, they are giving the most serious attention to the whole of the proceedings. But here is the point. I do not know whether it was the Attorney General who selected the Judges, or whether they were selected by the Lord Chancellor. Of course, the hon. and learned Gentleman does not mean to say that they volunteered to undertake a work which the President of the Commission compared to their being tied to the stake, so heavy was the labour and so tremendous the responsibility. Well, I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman were they selected by the Lord Chancellor? If so, he is a Member of the Government that stood to win or lose by the result of the case then about to be inquired into, and we are brought face to face with the astounding fact that the Government, which was about to try its political opponents on a charge of participation in murder, actually constituted the very tribunal by which the charge was to be investigated, its principal law officer being at the same time chief counsel for the accusing party. I do not think the judiciary of this country, whose past is full of great and noble traditions, can show a parallel to this. I put it to the Government, why did they not show some respect for the traditions of that institution whose independence and honesty—whose most sacred principles—have been subjected to a strain which no one who is proud of the honour of his country would have consented to impose? I come, now, to the last point. The hon. and learned Gentleman has avowed the authorship of the apology. I confess that I should not have believed the statement if I had not heard it from his own lips; and I will venture to make this prophecy, that to-morrow his confession will be the cause of reaction, not merely among the political opponents of the hon. and learned Gentleman, but among many of his friends also. Let us see what were the terms of the apology:—

> "My Lords, under the circumstances, it seems to us that the course we ought to take is clear, and, believing that we are merely doing our duty, I now, on behalf of those whom I represent, ask permission to withdraw from your consideration the genuineness of the letters that have been submitted to you, the authenticity of which is denied."

The hon. and learned Gentleman does not even say they are forged, but commits himself simply to a negative instead of a positive statement—

> "With a full acknowledgement that after the evidence that has been given we are not entitled to say they are genuine."

They may be genuine; probably they are genuine, as the Marquess of Salisbury still asserts, and as all the Primrose Dames alleged at the Kennington election, and as, I have no doubt, they are now saying at Enfield, after the friendly lead of the Marquess of Salisbury and the hon. and learned Gentleman. They may be genuine—probably they are; but "we are not entitled to say they are genuine." This is a scurvy and miserable pretence which the hon. and learned Gentleman now describes as the very uttermost limit which even his generosity could assign to what he put forward as an apology. Then, the hon. and learned Gentleman continued—

> "My Lords, it is possible that any expression of regret made by me in making this statement may be misinterpreted. Those whom I represent request me to express their sincere regret that these letters were published. That feeling, which most truly exists, will, at the proper time, be more fully expressed by them."

"The proper time" came the following morning—when the *Times* newspaper thought it had more fully expressed sincere regret when it embodied the statement of the Attorney General. Now, Sir, the charge is that my hon. Friend made a communication as to the Phœnix Park murders. What was the charge against my hon. Friend (Mr. Parnell)? That he expressed regret for the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish, from motives merely of expediency and prudence—a murder which caused deep and heartfelt grief in Irish hearts all over the world. I have been told by some of my countrymen in America that tears were shed in Irish homes three or four thousand miles away because of the melancholy and tragic death of Lord Frederick Cavendish. My hon. Friend was represented in this letter as not sympathizing with the feeling aroused universally when this honourable, generous and worthy official, who sent a message of peace and friendship and conciliation to the Irish race, met with an end so tragic. My hon. Friend is represented as regretting the accident, and, at the same time, expressing approval of the murder of Mr. Bourke. Here is a charge of complicity. Mark, that is not the only letter. There is the other—"It is time to make things hot for old Forster." What does that mean? I do not mean to say that was the charge made by the Attorney General, because there is a great deal of difference between the charge made by the Attorney General and the charge made by the *Times* in leading articles. It was very considerably cut down and sub-edited by the Attorney General in his speech. This charge of sympathy with murder, privity to murder, complicity with murder, encouragement to murder, is said to be fully withdrawn—withdrawn with a superabundance and excess of generosity, when the Attorney General says, "Those whom I represent request me to express their sincere regret that these letters were published." Well, I should say the regret is of a very different kind. I have not the smallest doubt there was very profound and very sincere regret on the part of the *Times* newspaper when the letters turned out not to be true. The hon. and learned Gentleman describes the apology as sincere and full. Well, I do not call an apology sincere and full, which leaves room for misinterpretation. When the right hon. and learned Gentleman said "We are not entitled to say the letters are genuine," did he or did he not mean that the letters were forged? Let us have a plain answer to that question. Let there be an end to this reign of lies. Let us have a full, explicit, and candid statement from the hon. and learned Gentleman, so that the

Marquess of Salisbury shall not have any opportunities of speaking of these letters being involved in a mist; or that the Chief Secretary shall be able, as he did last night, to ask us why we were not able to answer for the appearance of Pigott in the box. I know that the hon. and learned Gentleman will not like to give a full and ample apology, and to give a full and ample statement with regard to these letters, which would spoil the trade of the Primrose League. It might actually influence some elections; it might expose the matter in such a way that it would be appreciated by the dullest Tory, even by the hon. Member for the Loughborough Division, who, I observed, last night nodded his head when there was some expression of doubt from some part of the House as to whether all the letters were forged or not.

Mr. de LISLE (Loughborough): Decidedly.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: You say your apology was complete. It was not complete enough for the hon. Gentleman; for it was so meagre, so indefinite, so negative, that you have left the hon. Gentleman the loophole to say that some of the letters, all of which you know to be forged, may not be forged. This is the full, and ample, and generous apology which the learned Attorney General has given. Well, Sir, I looked forward with some considerable anxiety to what the Attorney General would say here to-night. I will not say I was anxious. I should have been glad if I could have had a much higher opinion of his conduct in this case than I am unfortunately driven to entertain. But, Sir, having listened of his apology and his defence—that very able and dexterous defence—I must say that it has only confirmed my very worst impressions, and that it has piled Pelion on Ossa to the proof which already existed of the unfair manner in which the learned Attorney General conducted the case. If the hon. and learned Gentleman had been Crown Prosecutor in a criminal trial, I am sure he would have cut off his right hand rather than do the deeds into which he has been betrayed by Party passion and political interest. I do not know whether it is so or not, but I think myself he had to be scourged almost to take up the case of the prosecution. The hon. and learned Gentleman laughs at that observation. Well, perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps he took up the dirty work willingly. This case will be heard of as long as English history lasts. The prominent antagonists in it will live, not, perhaps, from their own importance, but from the cruelty of suffering on the one hand, and the depth of infamy on the other; and I believe that future generations of Englishmen will look back with sorrow and surprise to the part the Attorney General has taken in it.

*Sir JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I do not know that I have ever intervened in one of these debates, nor do I now rise to discuss the question raised by the right hon. Member for Derby. I wish, however, to make an appeal to hon. Members beyond the Gangway and below me, and, at any rate, to enter my own protest courteously, but still strongly, against the continuance of this debate. Let us get on with the business of the country. We have now begun a discussion to-night; we had a long debate last night; and in the form of questions we have had a rambling debate almost every night lately, practically on the proceedings before a judicial tribunal now sitting. This I cannot but regard, in the first place, as a very unfortunate waste of the time of the House. There are a great many important subjects, many Bills anxiously looked for by the country, but these discussions put them off almost indefinitely. But, further than that, though, no doubt, hon. Members are technically in their right, still I cannot but regard—and I believe the country regard—these debates as highly inconvenient and constituting a very unfortunate precedent. The hon. Member who has just sat down spoke courteously of the Commission, but there have been other speeches which, even if not so intended, certainly appeared as if they were attacks upon the impartiality of that tribunal. Against speeches which are made in the country, the judges may and can protect themselves. But we have in this House great privileges—and very properly, Sir, and that makes it all the more desirable that those privileges should not be strained or abused. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby drew a distinction between that part of the case which was still before the

Commission and that part relating to evidence which has been withdrawn; but in other speeches he dwelt upon the matters which are still under the consideration of that tribunal. I am not now, however, going to adopt the course I am deprecating, and I have risen simply to express a hope that we may be allowed to go on with the business of the country, and take up those other matters which we have been sent to Parliament to carry through. I am sure we are all jealous of the character and dignity of the House of Commons, and not less hon. Members below the Gangway thnn in other parts of the House, and I fear that, if we go on as we have been doing of late, we shall do much to lower and impair the dignity of the House, both as a business-like Assembly and as an impartial tribunal. I appeal to hon. Members not to continue a discussion which is a wanton waste of public time, and which looks like an attempt to discredit the Commission, and not to set the unfortunote precedent of discussing a question now under investigation by a judicial tribunal.

MR. CHANCE (Kilkenny, S.): The hon. Baronet (Sir J. Lubbock) not only expressed his personal opinion that the statement—the very elaborate and ingenious statement—of the Attorney General was satisfactory to him, but took upon himself to speak in the name of the country. I notice that certain Members of the House, especially Unionist Members, are very apt to speak in the name of the country, and yet show the most profound disinclination to take the verdict of any constituency, even of such a constituency as the University of London which the hon. Baronet represents. Now, the Attorney General has in his speech followed the tactics which the whole party opposite have pursued from the very commencement of this unfortunate and miserable business; it is a water-tight compartment policy—one old friend goes to another old friend and no one is responsible for what any one else does. The Attorney General did not deal with the charges made against him as a whole, but as if each was distinct and had no bearing with any of the rest. I understand the question to be whether the Attorney General has abused his position as Attorney General and at the Bar, and done so in a manner which calls for an expression of the condemnation of the Committee. We are not engaged in questioning the proceedings of the Commission, in discussing matter under consideration by the Commission, but we are engaged in discussing the conduct of the Attorney General as Attorney General and as Counsel for the *Times* in relation to one or two matters upon which the Commission has already expressed a very strong and definite opinion. The Attorney General commenced his speech by stating that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby had assumed that the charge as to the forged letters was the only one contained in the Attorney General's speech. I do not think the assumption was at all warranted. It was the main charge, it was the heart of the whole charge, and more than one Member sitting opposite expressed that view very publicly at the time when the Tory party had some hope that the main and principal charge would be brought home to the hon. Member for Cork. I can quite understand they do not take that view now. Their sole object at present seems to be to deny their own speeches and to disassociate themselves as much as possible from their own friends and allies. In my opinion the principal charge against the Attorney General amounts to this, that he, acting as the prosecutor in a criminal prosecution, because the proceedings before the Commission amount to criminal prosecution, permitted his clients to attempt to support their charges by perjury, by fraud, by forgery, and by subornation of perjury; and, at a time when if he knew anything he must have known that the *Times* was supporting its case as to the forged letters by such means, he deliberately shut his eyes to the facts, and continued to hold his brief for the *Times*. I will assume for the moment that the hon. and learned Gentleman is the most innocent of men. I will assume that at the time he held his brief in the case of O'Donnell against Walter, he did not pledge his personal credit; but it will be within the recollection of every Member of the Committee that in his statement in that case the hon. Gentleman stated positively and distinctly — say, if you like, from his instructions—that the *Times* had used every possible means and applied every possible test to discover whether the letters were authentic or not. The first inquiry I make is, when he made that statement in Court, had he in his brief materials justifying the statement? The hon. and learned Gentleman has told us that when the crisis was reached he felt it his duty to lay before the Commission every particle of evidence he had relating to the letters, and that that was his justification for putting on the table a man whom he must have known, or must strongly have suspected, had intended and did intend to perjure himself. If the *Times* had no other evidence as to the genuineness of the letters than the bare and unsupported evidence of Pigott, how did it come to pass that this experienced counsel, the leader of the English Bar, stated that the *Times* had used every possible means to test the authenticity of the letters? Either the statement was made without a particle of foundation, or else the learned Gentleman has not done what he said he would do—laid before the Commission every particle of evidence in his possession bearing upon the history and authenticity of the letters. I cannot assume for an instant the *Times* briefed him piecemeal; he must have had the facts before him in the first instance or not at all. I cannot conceive that a man of his position and eminence at the Bar would allow himself to be bottle-fed day by day with his facts. But in November, at any rate, the Attorney General had a statement from Pigott which, read between the lines, clearly showed Pigott feared cross-examination; indeed, he said if the *Times* depended upon his evidence he could prove nothing. With these facts before him the Attorney General must have seen he could not hope to prove to the satisfaction of the Court that the letters were genuine. When he got Pigott's letter in December, had he in his brief a particle of evidence that the *Times* had made the least attempt to test the authenticity of the letters? If he had he was bound to produce it. If he had not it, why did he not go to the *Times* and say to them, "You have retained me with the assent of the Government; upon my instructions I made a statement in Court some months ago; I now find from my brief there is not a single iota of evidence beyond the statement of Pigott; you have put a lie into my mouth, and I decline to act further for you?" That would have been an honourable and upright course to adopt, but from his statement, it does not appear he knew Pigott was a broken reed; he did not make any inquiry as to whether the *Times* had anything to substantiate the statement he made months before. The hon. and learned Gentleman said to-night that he could not vouch for the authenticity of the letters. I agree with him in a limited sense. He practically pledged his credit as an officer of the Crown, and as the Leader of the English Bar, that the material in his brief was sufficient to entitle him, as a prudent and experienced counsel, to say that he could prove the truth of the letters. I think I am entitled to assume that some time in December the Attorney General had full notice of the fact that the *Times* had put a lie in his mouth. Still he remained counsel for the *Times*. He says it is not the duty of a counsel to satisfy himself as to the reality or truthfulness of every witness he calls. That is undoubtedly true; but the hon. and learned Gentleman ought to have gone on to say there is a grave and serious distinction between the position of a counsel for a prisoner or accused, who is bound to use every reasonable and honest endeavour to rescue his client from peril and danger, and the counsel for the prosecution. The latter is practically charged with the fair and just execution of the criminal law, and is bound only to use the most scrupulously honourable weapons for the purpose of obtaining a conviction; he is bound to assure himself that in his instructions he uses no indirect, no disgraceful, no dishonest instruments. In view of what has happened in this case, I do not think the Attorney General made any attempt to satisfy himself that those who instructed him had done anything to test their case. From witness after witness whom the Attorney General called it appeared that letters were burnt, and evidence of the most material and valuable character got rid of. Yet, in face of all these facts, the Attorney General continued to struggle on in this desperate case. Once he was siezed with the knowledge of the fact that the *Times* had undertaken a hopeless case, and acted in a disgraceful and dishonourable fashion, it was the hon. and learned Gentleman's duty to disassociate himself from the attempt to obtain the conviction of his political opponents by such means. The Attorney General took to himself great credit that he produced to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Hackney (Sir C. Russell) Pigott's letter five days before Pigott's examination. On examination, however, it turns out that instead of spontaneously and generously offering the hon. and learned Member for Hackney the letter, the letter was forced out of him. The solicitor for the *Times* having mentioned the existence of the document, the counsel for the accused was entitled to see it. Yet the Attorney General elicited cheers from the crowded benches behind him by implying that he gave, as a matter of courtesy, what was dragged out of him by the exigencies of the case. Now I come to the last, but I think a very grave, portion of the indictment made against the hon. and learned Gentleman. When it was proved that the letters were forgeries, any fair, not to say generous, opponent, would frankly and freely have submitted that part of the case to the judgment of the Court. But what course did the Attorney General adopt? He applied to the Court for permission to withdraw from their consideration the question of the genuineness or the authenticity of the letters. He did not say "I consent that judgment should go against me on this point." No, he said, "Now we have failed to prove anything, would you be so good as to allow us to withdraw this question from your consideration?" He did not withdraw the letters on the ground that it was proved pretty conclusively that the letters were forgeries, not on the ground that the Members implicated had expressed their willingness to go into the witness box and swear the letters were forgeries, but on the ground that the evidence up to the point given by the hon. Gentleman's allies and clients was not sufficient when viewed by the strict and harsh rules of law to entitle him to call upon the Court to find the letters were authentic and genuine. Nothing more disgraceful can well be conceived, and I do not believe there is another counsel at the Bar who would have done anything under such cirumstances but pray the Court to then and there pronounce judgment on the letters. Did the Attorney General express regret to the hon. Member for Cork, who had been slandered and traduced on every Unionist platform and by every Primrose Dame in England? Did he express regret that the letters had been used at every election against the Home Rule candidates? Not a bit. Did he express regret to the hon. Member who for such a length of time had laboured under horrible imputations? No. He simply expressed regret that the letters had been published, not that they had been bought by the *Times*, not that they had been used in private circles for months before they were published, not that they had been used on the morning of the Division upon the Second Reading of the Crimes Bill, not that they had been the foundation upon which "Parnellism and Crime" had been built, but simply and solely that they had been published. The statement in the *Times* itself simply amounted to an expression of regret that they had failed to prove the letters, not that they had recklessly published them, or that they had used them so unscrupulously against their political opponents. I am sorry to use anything like strong language against any opponent, but I must express my sincere and profound conviction that there is not another counsel in England who would adopt the dishonourable, the shabby, and the heartless tactics which have been adopted in this case by the hon. and learned Gentleman who represents Her Majesty's Government and the *Times* at one and the same time.

*Mr. de LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid.): Perhaps I may be permitted to make a few observations upon this grave and unfortunate subject. I regret the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, in opening the debate, did not show us exactly what he was driving at by moving the reduction of the salary of the Attorney General. The last speaker has, however, put the question very plainly: it is, briefly stated, whether the Attorney General has abused his position of Attorney General in the fulfilment of his duties as counsel for the *Times*. Amongst other things, the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr. Chance) complained of the manner in which the Attorney General withdrew the letters from the consideration of the Court, and that the hon. and learned Gentleman ought not to have asked permission to withdraw the letters, but should have asked the Commission to sit in judgment upon them. I suppose the Royal Commissioners will in due course pronounce very decidedly upon the letters, and so far as I understand the matter the Attorney General has shown no desire to evade the question of the letters, in fact, he has invited the condemnation of the judges on that portion of the evidence. Some of us think it would have been better if the withdrawal had not been made so promptly, because in our opinion there were many incidents in connection with that portion of the evidence which we should have liked to have seen entirely and absolutely cleared up. Personally, in speeches delivered in my constituency and elsewhere I have never said I believed in the letters; on the contrary, I have always said I thought it would be impossible to prove them to be genuine even if they were genuine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The question before the Committee is not the opinion of the hon. Member but the action of the Attorney General.

*MR. DE LISLE: I think I shall be in order, however, in saying in reply to the attack upon our integrity by the last speaker, that when we on this side of the House voted for the appointment of the Commission we then voted sincerely and absolutely in the interest of truth and justice.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee strictly relates to the action of the Attorney General.

*MR. DE LISLE: It seems to me, Sir, that the Debate has travelled very far beyond the immediate action of the Attorney General; but I will say at once I don't think the Attorney General has in any way forfeited the confidence of the Government or of the House because, when certain portions of the evidence broke down, he did not there and then throw up his brief. The Attorney General was engaged, as I understand, in proving the truth of the allegations contained in "Parnellism and Crime," and, therefore, I think I shall be in order in quoting the concluding portion of the first series of articles, which seem to sum up very well the charges:—

> "We suspend our studies of Parnellism. They do not affect to be complete. They are made on a cursory examination of a small portion of the published evidence. They have, however, revealed nearly all the chief members of the first Home Rule Ministry—Mr. Parnell himself, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Healy, Mr. Biggar, the Messrs. Redmond, Mr. William O'Brien, and Davitt—in trade and traffic with avowed dynamiters and known contrivers of murder. Ample materials for a fuller treatment exists in the files of Irish, American, and English newspapers. But there is other evidence hitherto unpublished. As Lord Spencer told the Ulster Loyalists on Waterloo Day, the year before he deserted them, 'We have yet to deal with crime undiscovered, secret conspiracy, and threads which must be unravelled.'"

It seems to me our discussion is really premature; the case is *sub judice*, and I cannot conceive what respect for the law and the Courts of Justice, and for the traditions of this House, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby can have when he starts a debate of this kind. Unfortunately, an attempt has been made to make the whole of this question of Parnellism and Crime depend upon the fact whether these letters are genuine or not. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool (Mr. T. P. O'Connor) had been present, I should have asked him why, when he was speaking to-night and making an attack upon the Commission itself, and only indirectly upon the conduct of the Attorney General, he did not repeat the charge which appeared on the 21st of March in a newspaper of which he is presumably the editor—a charge of base conspiracy to procure what he knew to be false and perjured evidence? Perhaps I may point out that amongst the charges in "Parnellism and Crime" not yet decided, but of which the Attorney General, in the prosecution of his duty, will do his utmost to ascertain the truth or faltehood, namely, the charge against the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. It occurs in the first issue in Parnellism and Crime — and is as follows—

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. Member is very unnecessarily extending the scope of the debate by entering into that branch of the argument.

*MR. DE LISLE: I bow to your ruling, Sir, and will simply say that in my opinion the Attorney General has so far conducted this case, not only with the utmost regard for his political opponents, but in a manner which will add everlastingly to his fame. When the inquiry comes to an end, I shall be delighted if every one of the charges have been proved to be as groundless as the charges with regard to the letters. I feel that the attack made on the Attorney General by the hon. Member for Derby will certainly redound to his everlasting shame. He has held high office as Irish Secretary and Home Secretary, and knows perhaps better than any man in the country whether the main charges are true or false.

Mr. J. REDMOND (Wexford, N.): Mr. Chairman, the Attorney General, at the close of his speech, expressed a feeling of pity for those who had prostituted, in his opinion, their positions for party ends. I think the feeling of pity in that regard was not confined entirely to the hon. and learned Gentleman's breast. I think a feeling of pity was felt very generally in the House for the hon. and learned Gentleman himself as he spoke. To me it was a pitiful spectacle to see the leader of the English Bar obliged to come to the Table and make the kind of apology for his conduct—in a great State inquiry of this kind—which the hon. and learned Gentleman was constrained to make to-night. Now, I desire to follow, as far as I can, the moderation of the tone of the speech with which the subject was introduced to-night. ["Oh, oh."] Yes, if there was one thing more remarkable then another in the two first speeches in the debate, it was the contrast between the moderate and judicial tone of the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Derby, and the tone of heated passion with which the Attorney General addressed himself to the accusations. I submit that, with reference to many of the charges the hon. and learned Gentleman's defence has been a futile and absurd system of evasion. The Attorney General mentions that he had an absolute right to take a brief on behalf of the *Times*. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Derby, did not say the Attorney General had no technical right to take a brief for the *Times*, but what he did contest was, that the Attorney General had any moral right to take that class of business which, by its character and the time which it involved, incapacitated the Attorney General from the fulfilment of the duties which he owed to the State. The very first question asked of the hon. and learned Gentleman was, did he or did he not advise the Government, of which he is Chief Law Officer, as to the Special Commission Act when it was introduced in the House? If he did not advise the Government in that matter, then he abdicated his functions; on the other hand, if he did advise the Government in the matter, we have the spectacle of the Law Officer of the Crown advising the Government as to an inquiry in which he was to take a leading part on behalf of the accusers. The Attorney General says that this is a private inquiry. The Home Secretary, who had charge of the Special Commission Bill during its passage through the House, said last night that, so far from this being a private inquiry it is a State inquiry into the conduct of the enemies of the Queen, and I think one of the admissions of the Attorney General himself goes far to show that this is not an ordinary private inquiry. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby asked the Attorney General whether, before taking his brief, he had obtained the assent of the Government, and the hon. and learned Gentleman's reply was that he had. Are we to understand that before taking a brief in some ordinary commercial case in the Courts the Attorney General has to get the consent of the Ministry? No, Sir, the Attorney General asked for the assent of his colleagues, and obtained it, because this is a great State inquiry. Now, the real charge appears to me to be this. The hon. and learned Gentleman knew that Pigott was the source of the letters. Why, when he knew that, did he not in his position as counsel order adequate inquiries to be made into the character and antecedents of the witness upon whose testimony alone the letters depended? Did he satisfy himself that he could by evidence which was in his brief prove the allegations about the letters? When, having been of opinion that the evidence placed before him entitled him to say that he could prove the letters, did he subsequently come into possession of facts that caused him to alter that opinion? We know what was his opinion in July, 1888. Speaking on this matter, he said every possible means had been taken to test the authenticity of the letters; among other means, a comparison of handwriting had been used. In that same month of July, writing upon the result of the O'Donnell *v.* Walter action, the *Times* said the charges rested no longer on the statement of a newspaper, but that they now "rested on a solemn statement in Court of the Head of the English Bar," and that the official character of the right hon. Gentleman afforded "an absolute guarantee" that, in his learned judgment, he could prove the charge. The Attorney General used even stronger words in this House. Speaking on July 4, 1888, he said this—

> "The whole of the case which I opened I was prepared to prove, and, if I am counsel for the *Times* again, I shall be prepared to prove. Evidence is available whenever it is wanted."

Now he is indignant because the right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt) stated that the Attorney General vouched for the letters; but I am justified, after these statements at the outset, from the statement in the *Times*, and from his statement in the House, that he had evidence to prove the whole of the case—I am justified, in the face of these statements, in asserting that he did vouch for the authenticity of the letters. Of course, we quite understand the distinction drawn by the hon. and learned Gentleman as to the opinion of counsel; of course, in saying he vouched for the letters, I do not mean to say he was expressing his personal opinion that the letters were genuine. Do not let me be misunderstood—that would have been an improper and unprofessional thing to have done; but he did vouch that, in his opinion, as one of the oldest and best-trained lawyers at the English Bar, an opinion given with the information before him, the evidence would be sufficient to prove the letters. Then, I say, is it not a dishonest subterfuge for Members to play on the word "vouch"? Though he repeatedly said, in and out of the House, he had evidence to prove the letters authentic, he now says he did not vouch for the letters, and the right hon. Gentleman is mistaken in saying that he did. That was his position in July. How long did that state of mind last? I am quite sure that when the Attorney General made his statement in July he believed his evidence, and thought he was in a position to prove the authenticity of the letters; but how long did he remain in that position? There is another question he has not answered. When did he first hear of Pigott as the source of these letters? I understand him to say that it was in the middle of December he first saw the letters of November 19th ——

*SIR R. WEBSTER: On the 23rd or 24th of October.

MR. J. REDMOND: I am glad to know that at the date of the opening of the Commission he was aware that Pigott was the source of these letters. I do not know whether the Attorney General will favour the Committee again on this subject before the Vote is passed, but I think many Members will be interested to know what steps the hon. and learned Gentleman advised his clients to take as soon as he heard that Pigott was the source of these letters. Did he order his solicitor to institute any inquiry into the character and antecedents of Pigott? He heard in October that Pigott was the source of the letters, but he only heard in the middle of December that Pigott had written the letter of November 17th, in which he stated he should break down under cross-examination. Did he before he had that letter cause any inquiry to be made into the character of Pigott? Did he ask Mr. Soames why the letter of November 17th was kept back from him for a month? Did he ask Mr. Soames if he had made any inquiry into the antecedents and character of Pigott? If not, why not? The Attorney General has not informed us when he learned for the first time that Houston—one of the gang of conspirators—had destroyed the correspondence between himself and Pigott? When he heard the correspondence had been destroyed, immediately after Houston was subpœnaed by the hon. Member for Cork, did he then know that Pigott, the source of the letters, had a character of the very worst kind? Knowing Pigott had said his evidence would break down, did he, because of that letter, alter the opinion he held in July, that he had sufficient evidence to prove the authenticity of the letters? I have to ask the hon. and learned Gentleman another thing. He alluded to the statement of Pigott, made, I think, on October 19th, to show that he was in possession, or his solicitor was in possession, of a statement from Pigott that the letters were genuine. Now, unless I am greatly mistaken, that statement of Pigott was made immediately after he had been accused by my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, at a personal interview, of being guilty of forgeries on certain banks in Ireland in certain commercial matters. Did the Attorney General know when the Commission opened of this statement of Pigott's, and of this accusation, and if so, did he order any investigation to be made? Ah! we have the evidence of Mr. Soames, who was asked—

> "When you saw the statement of Pigott, and knew that he was accused of fraud in commercial matters, did you institute any inquiry?"

Mr. Soames, on examination, had to admit that he did not order any investigation to be made into the truth of the allegations of forgery against Pigott, that he did not apply to the banks which it was alleged Pigott had swindled by forged documents. In fact, Mr. Soames, in the innocence of his heart, and acting on the instructions of the Attorney General, accepted the statement of Pigott that the accusation of forgery by the hon. Member for Cork was untrue. The Attorney General thinks we object to his having put Pigott in the box, but it seems to me nobody has made that accusation, and it would be an absurd one to make. Of course, he was obliged to put Pigott in the box; he knew that if he did not do so we would. He knew that, as a matter of fact, we had subpœnaed him before the *Times* subpœnaed him at all. But that is not our accusation; our complaint is not that he did put Pigott in the box, but that he did not put him in the box long before. What is the position in which the Attorney General stands in reference to the letters? He had stated, and he acted on his belief, solemnly expressed, or his responsibility, that he could prove them by sufficient evidence in his possession. In December, at latest, he learned that the evidence on which he made that statement was unreliable. What did he do in December? He either inquired fully into the character of Pigott and the character of his evidence, or he did not. If he inquired fully into the matter through his solicitor, then he must have known long before Christmas that the whole story about the letters was an infamous concoction—a foul conspiracy on the part of a number of men—and that the allegation about evidence of the letters could not be maintained. If he did not inquire, his position is still more humiliating to him. On his responsibility he stated he could prove the letters, yet what did he do? This is my accusation against him. As soon as he found that the evidence on which he relied was tainted, that moment, in common fairness to us, in justice to the whole community, he ought at once to have put Pigott in the box, and have passed over the interminable reading of speeches and extracts from the *Irish World* and other papers. No; his statement that he could prove the letters was allowed to remain on the public mind, and the *Times* was allowed to continue to say that the official character of the Attorney General was sufficient guarantee of the absolute authenticity of the letters. He did not say that it had come to his knowledge that the evidence on which he relied was tainted and unworthy, he continued to allow these calumnies to be spread abroad, he continued to allow his own calumnies, as they turned out to be, as to the evidence on which he relied, to remain on the minds of the people, putting off to the last possible moment the investigation of the case as regarded the letters. My accusation is not that he did put Pigott in the box, but that he did not put him in the box the moment it became apparent that this part of his case could not be sustained. When he came to that opinion, every moment of delay was cowardly and criminal. The Attorney General complains that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby accused him of putting off investigation while he piled up a mass of prejudice against the hon. Member for Cork, but what else was the meaning or, at any rate, what else was the effect, of the delay in entering on the case of the letters? He cannot say it was postponed because he had to follow the regular course of the case, because everybody who has paid the most cursory attention to the conduct of the case, knows that nothing could be more irregular than the manner in which the *Times* counsel jumped from one part of the case to another, and knows that he deliberately put off investigation, because it had come to his knowledge that the evidence on which he had promised to prove the letters was tainted and not to be relied on. In self-defence the hon. and learned Gentleman refers to his duty to support the indictment, and he quoted the words of the Lord Chief Justice as to the character of the indictment. He said, I think, in justification for putting off the letters that after all this was not the gravest allegation; grave, he said, as was the charge in regard to the *facsimile* letters, equally grave were the other charges. Now let me call attention to words used in the House last year. In July, 1888, the Attorney General speaking on the Commission Bill said, referring to the alleged Parnell letters of May 15, 1882, in which Lord Frederick Cavendish's death was alluded to as an accident:—

> "The most important issue in the case is whether that letter was signed by the Member for Cork or not."

I do not think anybody will contend for a moment that there was any pretence that this was not the real charge in the whole series of libels until from one source and another the Attorney General and those who acted with him began to find out they had probably been a little misled, and that the evidence on which they were relying was not so perfect as they thought. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) say?—

> "I agree with the hon. Member for Oldham that the letters constitute the principal part, if not the *gravamen*, of the charges, and no inquiry would be satisfactory that did not give a principal place to inquiry into the authenticity of the letters. If it can be successfully shown that these are forgeries, all the rest of the case, whatever it might be, would be so prejudiced, that I very much doubt if people will pay much attention to it."

Then, in another speech, the same right hon. Gentleman said—

> "If the *Times* fails to sustain its principal charge—that is, the letters—I do not think much importance will be attached to the other charges. Any attempt to put aside this principal charge, or not to put it in the forefront, will redound to their discredit. I do not think hon. Members need fear in the slightest degree that this charge can or will be avoided."

I have attempted to show that the claim of the Attorney General now, that he did not go into the letters at first because they were not the principal charge, is not an honest claim—is not one that can be supported against the evidence of his own words, as spoken in this House last year. I could not help feeling very much touched by the eloquent description given to-night by the right hon. the Member for Derby of the spirit in which the criminal law is administered in this country, and I could not help contrasting it—as, indeed, he did himself—with that spirit which animates the administration of the law in my country. The right hon. Gentleman said that the object of Crown Prosecutors in England was not to convict but to elicit the whole truth, and not to take the defendant by surprise. Unfortunately, that has not been the course which has been adopted by the Attorney Genernl in the conduct of this case of the *Times*. The Attorney General has alluded to the fact that two members of the Irish Bar are associated with him. I am not going to say a word against the Irish Bar as a body, but I am sorry to have to say this, that these two members of the Irish Bar who are engaged in the case are men who are chiefly remarkable as Crown Prosecutors in Ireland, and I am sorry to have to say I fear their connection with these English colleagues in the case they are conducting has had the effect of imparting into the conduct of the case the evil traditions which guide Crown Prosecutors in Ireland, inducing the desire rather to gain a verdict as if they were engaged in an ordinary civil case for a client than to elucidate the full truth, and not drive anything hardly or unfairly against the defendants. The Attorney General says he did not take us by surprise, and with an affectation of candour which was so shallow, so superficial, that I do not think it deceived anybody, and certainly did not deceive those who are acquainted with the proceedings before the Commission, he said—

> "This letter, which has been so much referred to, I myself handed to the hon. and learned Member for Hackney."

But he forgot to say, what it would have been candid to have said, that the manner in which this letter was produced was not by the Attorney General handing it over to the counsel for the Irish Members; he gave it when it was mentioned in the cross-examination of Mr. Soames or Houston, and after the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney had called for the letter, and the Attorney General was obliged to hand it over. I ask the Attorney General why, if he wanted to be straightforward with his opponents, if he wanted to act in the spirit of Crown Prosecutors and men of his position in this country, did he wait until the letter was demanded in the course of cross-examination? Why did he not hand it over the moment he received it from Mr. Soames? The Attorney General, I say, has pleaded guilty to the graver charges against him. He knew in October that the hon. Member for Cork had accused Pigott of frauds on certain named banks; he knew that on November 17 Pigott had written to the solicitor to the *Times* saying that his evidence would break down. He knew all this, and yet he persevered with this part of the case, and, in admitting that, I say, he entered a plea of guilty to the gravest of the allegations made against him to-night. But he pleaded guilty to another. I may say—nobody will think it an impertinence on my part—I really did feel sorry when the hon. and learned Gentleman stated at that Table that it was his hand which wrote the apology as it is called. It was a half-hearted, cowardly apology. It was the apology of a man who, if he had dared, would not have made an apology at all. It was the apology of a man who, if he had dared, would rather have taken up the position that Lord Salisbury has taken, that the letters, though not proved genuine, might be genuine after all. The Attorney General has been the means of doing a terrible wrong to Members of this House, and through them to the people of Ireland. He has been the instrument of spreading, of keeping alive a series of atrocious libels, and when these were proved to be slanders and libels, and he had to acknowledge it, he had not the courtesy, or the manliness, or the courage to make an honest apology for having done a wrong to his fellow-Members in this House. Exactly what was foretold when the Commission Bill was passing through the House has happened. I remember very well indeed speaking in the course of our discussions; and when I said we feared that by enlarging the scope of the inquiry, the specially allegations against the hon. Member for Cork and certain other Members would be given the go-by—would be relegated to the background—I was answered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), who said—

> "The hon. Member appears to fear that as the Bill is drawn the Commission will be drawn away from the investigation of the serious charges brought against him and his colleagues, and will be led over the whole field of Irish organization and Irish crime, and in this way a fair issue will be conceded. I put it to the House whether the hon. Member is not raising a bugbear in this matter? Supposing what he fears were actually the case, that the Commission were to be led into what is, by comparison, at all events, unimportant and irrelevant matter, it seems to me no vindication would be more complete than such a course as that."

That is exactly what has been done As we foretold, this inquiry has been spread over the whole field of Irish organization and Irish crime, and the specific allegations have been given the go-by. The inquiry as to the letters was delayed until the accusers could avoid it no longer. What about other charges almost as grave? I may mention, for example, the charges made against myself. Grave charges were made against me by the *Times*, and some of them I exposed last year, challenging the *Times* to go into the evidence. But the *Times* has closed its case, and has not mentioned these accusations, or anything in connection with them. In spite of all this, in spite of the tactics of the Attorney General, in spite of what I do not hesitate to call the cowardly, criminal conspiracy of those who are around him, if not under his control, the truth, in spite of all, prevails, and I, for one, thank God for all this, because I know how much, in England, depends on how these issues are disproved before the Commission. It is not merely a question of our character—we care little for that, except so far as the allegations affect the cause we have at heart. Mr. Courtney, you, and many others, will remember the time when, years ago, we sat here, and accusations of the foulest character were hurled against us by different Parties in the State. [*Laughter.*] Well, I do not see that there is any secret about it; I do not see there is any reason why hon. Members opposite should laugh. The past may be forgiven, and even forgotten, except for the record of history, which will show that we have been assailed as foully in the past as now; and as we have lived down these accusations in the past, so we will live them down again. So far as our own country is concerned, our characters in the eyes of those who know, trust, and honour us cannot be injured by such charges any more than by the idle wind. But we recognize that there may be evil consequences to the cause we have at heart from the system of vile calumny by which we have been pursued by unscrupulous enemies, and that the exposure of such a system will hasten the day when peace and contentment will reign in Ireland, and when, forgetting the past, Ireland will be united to this country by the bonds of friendship and goodwill. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by £1,000 in respect of the Attorney General's salary.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Item of £12,000 for Law Charges, England, be reduced by £1,000, part of the Salary of the Attorney General."—(*Mr. John Redmond.*)

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): No one on this (the Ministerial) side of the House has ever complained of the policy which hon. Gentlemen opposite think it right to pursue. What we have complained of and will complain of again is the methods by which that policy has been pursued. Hon. Gentlemen say that their characters have been assailed. My reply is that when charges of a most grave and serious nature were made against them, when month after month they declined to take the steps open to them—["Oh!"]—I suppose they share the opinion that before a jury of Englishmen—[*Interruption and cries of* "Salisbury!"] May I request the hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. Redmond) to spare me the discourteous interruptions of which he is more usually guilty than any other Member in the House? I appeal to hon. Gentlemen on that side and in every quarter of the House whether Gentlemen on the Ministerial side are perpetually and habitually trying by interruptions to interfere with the speeches and statements of Gentlemen on the opposite side.

Mr. W. REDMOND: You interrupted me four times. ("Name," and "Order.")

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry again to have to address the hon. Member. He must restrain himself and not interrupt.

Mr. W. REDMOND: Perhaps you will allow me, Sir, on the point of order to say that nothing was further from my intention than to interrupt; but when the right hon. Gentleman accuses me of interrupting him, let him remember that he interrupted me.

Mr. CHAPLIN: The hon. Member in making an accusation against the Attorney General—("Question," and interruption.) This is another instance of the chivalry and courtesy with which Members on this side are treated. An accusation has been just now made against me, and hon. Gentleman seek to deprive me of an opportunity of answering it. The hon. Gentleman last night made a charge against the Attorney General—("Order.")

The CHAIRMAN: If the right hon. Gentleman will show a better estimate of the relative value of things, the debate will be more orderly.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I accept with gratitude your suggestion, Sir. In the heat of the moment I was replying to charges which are absolutely unworthy of it. The hon. and learned Gentleman who last spoke, who charges us with assailing the character of himself and his friends, knows that when those charges were made against hon. Gentlemen this House gave them the fairest tribunal in the world to enable them to disprove the charges. At the close of his speech the hon. Member said he regretted to hear from the Attorney General that he was the author of the apology made by the *Times;* he also said that Lord Salisbury had hinted, or more than hinted, that though the letters were not proved to be true, he believed that they were. Well, I think that in all probability, so far as the Attorney General is concerned, he knows how to guard the interests intrusted to him better than the hon. Gentleman, and I believe it totally and absolutely untrue that Lord Salisbury ever made any statement which could be twisted into such a construction. On the contrary, Lord Salisbury, so far as I know, has given advice which I hope the House of Commons will follow—namely, that it would be far better to express no opinion or judgment on the question until the Judgment of the Court is pronounced. There were two statements of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) in which I cordially concur. The one is that th Attorney General is greatly indebted to him for provoking this debate, and the other that the Attorney General must be regarded as the adviser of the House of Commons and the guardian of its honour. That is true. We regard the Attorney General as a man of great courage, ability, and undoubted power, which he has fully and conclusively proved to-night. We regard him as the typical representative of an honourable profession, and we are proud to be associated with him on this side. We regard it as a privilege, and nothing less, and it is regarded as nothing less by every Member of the Bar in England. Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the fury and the fire with which the right hon. Member for Derby has spoken on previous occasions, and the bated breath with which he addressed the House to-night when he made his observations on the Attorney General. The chilly reception on his own side contrasted strongly with the rapturous cheers with which the reply of the Attorney General was greeted, and which were not limited by any means to the Ministerial side of the House. There were many Gentlemen opposite who rejoiced to see the manner in which the Attorney General defended himself against the charges of the right hon. Member for Derby. I do not think hon. Members opposite will be grateful to the right hon. Member for Derby, under whose leadership, in the absence of the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), they have been landed in as pretty a mess as, I think, I ever remember a political Party ever getting into. The right hon. Gentleman will not be surprised to hear that on this side of the House we listened with the utmost satisfaction to the castigation he received, which no Member of the House ever more thoroughly and richly deserved. In this exordium I was mainly anxious to express the estimate we, on this side of the House, hold of the Attorney General for England, and I might now very well resume my seat; but I ask the permission of the House to intervene for a moment longer, as there are one or two other things I desire to notice. The right hon. Gentleman said that the speech of the Attorney General in the case of "O'Donnell v. Walter" was the foundation of the whole of the charges alleged against hon. Gentlemen opposite. It was nothing of the kind. The right hon. Gentleman has a most convenient memory. The right hon. Gentleman says one thing in the House of Commons and another out of it. At Ely this is how the right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Commission. He said—

> "They might drag it on as a matter of antiquarian research, but the whole of the ridiculous rubbish was as dead as Julius Cæsar. But for the forged letters there would never have been this Commission of Inquiry."

The Committee should remember that this matter of antiquarian research forms by far the largest part of the charges and allegations. The right hon. Gentleman—and nobody knows it better than the right hon. Gentleman himself—was the founder and author of the whole of these charges. I myself heard the right hon. Gentleman say, speaking of the hon. Member for Mayo in this House, the doctrines of the hon. Member for Mayo were the doctrines of treason and assassination. The right hon. Gentleman said more; he said that he knew that these were the doctrines of the Land League. How did the right hon. Gentleman know it? "Because in my position, as responsible for the peace of the Queen's dominions, it was my duty to know it." As the right hon. Gentleman is so fond of cross-examining Members of the Government, I will myself claim the right of cross-examining the right hon. Gentleman, and I should like to ask him this question, upon which no light has yet been thrown as far as I am aware—How did the right hon. Gentleman know? He stated in this House, on his authority as a Minister of the Crown, that the doctrines and practice of the Land League were those of treason and assassination, and that the hon. Member for Mayo was their expounder.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how this is applicable to the reduction of the salary of the Attorney General.

MR. CHAPLIN: I, of course, bow invariably to the decision of the Chair, and I can only say that this affords another illustration of the extreme inconvenience and the extreme unfairness of the methods pursued by the right hon. Gentleman. I think I am justified in saying that the only way of getting out of the difficulty and arriving at the truth with regard to these matters is that the right hon. Gentleman himself should take the earliest opportunity of going into the witness-box before the Commissioners and recanting upon oath

—if he believes them to be untrue—the monstrous calumnies and libels he has uttered against hon. Members opposite. As I am debarred by your ruling, Sir—in which I heartily concur, and to which I most readily submit—from proceeding furthur in the cross-examination of the right hon. Gentleman, which, I think, might have resulted in some most interesting discoveries, I will not venture further to prolong the debate. I do not think anyone on this side of the House can object to the course which the right hon. Gentleman has pursued on one ground, for I believe that nothing which the right hon. Gentleman could have done could have conferred greater advantage upon us as a Party. None the less do I myself deplore it; I confess I have witnessed the whole of the proceedings in the House for the past few days with nothing but pain, because I regard them as proof of a most serious decadence in the morals and practice of the House. We have been engaged for three days in discussing the proceedings of a Commission, the evidence before which is only half completed, and on which the Judges themselves have issued no Report and expressed no opinion. I maintain that this is a breach of the propriety and decorum of the House of Commons and of its best traditions, and utterly repugnant to all sense of fairness.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I would suggest that when right hon. Gentlemen opposite complain that hon. Gentlemen on this side of the House are wasting the time of the House, they might save time by refraining from these extracts from the past history of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. It is as absurd to complain of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby as he now is, because he was different at another time, as to complain of St. Paul because he was once Saul and a persecutor of Christians. Every Gentleman on the opposite bench, and almost every Gentleman upon the front Opposition bench, has been tarred entirely with the same brush as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and dozens of times I have myself voted with Mr. Joseph Cowen alone with the Irish Members. I have never been able to understand why one gentleman should be singled out for attack, seeing that at the time of which Members opposite speak the whole Party on these benches had not seen salvation. I congratulate the Attorney General, and I do it sincerely, upon his effort as a forensic effort; but it was addressed to hon. Members opposite, whom it is unnecessary to convince, because they were already prepared to vote with him. I want, however, to say a word as to one or two statements of the hon. and learned Member. The hon. and learned Member explained how he had handed the letter from Pigott to the counsel for the defence; but it has been already shown that the letter was called for in Court and put in by Mr. Soames, and that it was absolutely necessary for the Attorney General to hand over this letter to the counsel for the defence; therefore he cannot come here and pride himself as one of the noblest of human beings. But there is another letter which was only produced after Pigott had disappeared, a letter dated May, 1887, from Pigott to Houston, in which Pigott said—

> "You may take it, therefore, as certain that any proceedings of any character that rely for success upon my testimony will fail."

Houston was acting as the agent of Mr. Soames, and Mr. Soames was the solicitor of the Attorney General; and I suppose that the Attorney General asked to be shown that letter. Therefore, we may take it that the letter was known to the Attorney General. Then there was the sworn statement of Pigott made to Mr. Shannon. But did Mr. Soames tell the Attorney General under what circumstances that sworn statement was made; that Pigott wanted to have £5,000 in order to appear, and that the reply was that the *Times* would not see him ruined if he told what he knew?

Sir R. WEBSTER: If he told the truth.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Well, the truth. But would the *Times* have paid him for telling the truth if he had lived? I do not think that was revealed to the hon. and learned Gentleman, or, if it was, surely he ought to have asked on seeing the letter, "Have you made any sort of inquiry into the character of this man?" No sort of inquiry was made into the character of this man, and yet if Houston had asked any human being in Dublin, or if the Attorney General had consulted the authorities at the Castle, he would have heard who Pigott was. Did the Attorney General know that letters of this nature had been offered to a former Secretary for Ireland, who had inquired of the officials who Pigott was, and then refused to have anything to do with him? He inquired who Pigott was, and said he would have nothing to do with him, and the right hon. Gentleman would have been wise if he had followed that example. The plain fact is the *Times* had not the remotest intention of calling either Pigott or Houston. They intended to put Mr. Macdonald into the box, and he was to have refused to state from whom he had received the letters, after which the experts were to have been called in to speak to the authenticity of those letters. There is ample evidence of this, as will be seen when we remember when it was that Houston and Pigott were subpœnaed. This was not until Mr. Lewis, on behalf of the defendants, had subpœnaed them both. It is very curious to notice the revelations we get from that Bench. If the Attorney General is accused, he says he knows nothing of these things; if Mr. Soames is accused, what is the answer we get then? Why, the Attorney General gave it to-night. He says it is perfectly monstrous and wicked to accuse Mr. Soames, because he is not a Member of this House. What we want to elicit from this species of *Vehmgericht* that has been inaugurated is, what responsibility we can fix to each particular person in this case. The hon. and learned Gentleman has complained that I said I would not believe Mr. Soames upon his oath. Well, I would not. What was it that Mr. Soames said about Pigott and Houston? He began by saying that he found from whom the letters had been bought in September, 1887. Then he said he knew the summer before the trial. Why could he not have said, having been in the box 13 different times, when it was he knew, or found out, or learned that Pigott and Houston were the authors of those letters? The truth is that Mr. Soames made a distinction between knowing the thing as a solicitor and knowing it as a private individual, just as he made a distinction between the counsel for the defence and Sir Richard Webster. We who are not lawyers cannot follow these distinctions; we take a man as one and not as two or three individuals; but here we have first the Attorney General, then, not the Attorney General, but the counsel for the *Times*, and then, merely Sir Richard Webster. We are unable to divest him of his position as Attorney General, nor can he divest himself of the character for a single moment. The hon. and learned Gentleman was indignant at the charge that he had postponed the letters until stronger evidence had been called; and if this had been really a private case, there would have been nothing wrong in his so doing. The Attorney General wanted to do the best he could for his client, and thought it good policy and good tactics to put forward a series of strong points that might injure Mr. Parnell and the other defendants, and do away with any reliability upon their evidence when they should go into the box, as they had said they would, to swear they had not written the letters. I do not understand why the Attorney General was so indignant, unless it was that although he says the suit was a private suit, he knew it was a public suit. The hon. and learned Gentleman had the Home Secretary sitting by him, and the right hon. Gentleman would have told him that if he had so dealt with it as a public suit it would have undoubtedly been most improper, the more so considering his position as Attorney General and as a Member of Her Majesty's Government. Again, the right hon. Gentleman protested against the charge that he would not give the names of witnesses, and that he had sheltered himself behind the Court. But what really took place? The counsel for the defence asked that the names of the witnesses should be given to him. The Attorney General protested against this, and the Court said it could not interfere and compel the names to be given. Was that the action of the Court? No; it was that of the Attorney General exercising his extreme rights. And how did the Attorney General proceed? Why, he dodged about from county to county, calling four or five witnesses from one and then taking evidence from another, so that the defence could not follow him. They did not know beforehand from what county witnesses were going to be called, nor from what particular part of any county; and consequently, were unable to arrange for such inquiries as were necessary for purposes of cross examination. I will give an instance. There was one man who confessed to stealing money on policies of insurance and that witness's character was utterly smashed up. When, however, he was put into the box by the prosecutor, there was no idea of telling the counsel for the defendant what this man was. He might have been one of the most virtuous of the human race; but that very morning it happened, by a mere chance, that some information was received respecting him, and this was used by the counsel for the defence in order to destroy the value of that man's testimony. Then take the case of Le Caron. Why did they not give his name before? The Chief Secretary for Ireland has said that Le Caron is a man against whom nothing can be urged, because he was not cross-examined. But I would ask, how can you cross-examine a man who is suddenly sprung upon the Court from America? I would recommend the Attorney General not to get into a fool's Paradise about Le Caron. They will find that they and their Mr. Anderson, who gave a certificate of the truthfulness and integrity of the man Le Caron, are altogether in the wrong box before we have finished with Mr. Le Caron, unless I am exceedingly mistaken. Now, Sir, the Attorney General and other Gentlemen on that side of the House have indulged in insinuations against me. Generally, when hon. Gentlemen on that side are talking about this matter, they turn upon me, sitting here in a quiet way, and depict me as a sort of viper. The Attorney General said he supposed I had entered into negotiations with Pigott because Pigott was a scoundrel. Well, of course I did. It was precisely because I thought him a scoundrel that I took the course I did with regard to him. I wanted to know why he was at the bottom of the forgery, and I wanted to get from him some good and solid account of what had taken place. The hon. Gentleman opposite has asked why should you not address questions to me about Pigott instead of to Gentlemen on that Bench? I do not wish to waste the time of the House, but I should be glad to answer every question they may be good enough to put. If they ask questions of me, they will find me as clear as crystal and as pure as gold. Well, Sir, it was the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary who said why did not I have Pigott arrested when he had confessed himself to be a forger and perjurer? But what was I to do? Was I to walk into the streets, and say to the first police officer I saw, "Here is a man who says he is a forger and perjurer; arrest him!" The right hon. Gentleman knows that that would be impossible; but I would have had the man watched, and I would have taken care that he should not have gone away, if I had known he was not being watched by the Government. I knew, however, that two members of the Royal Irish Constabulary Force were in his hotel. Could I for a moment have imagined that those two policemen were put on by Mr. Shannon, and that he was not being watched by the Government, but by Mr. Shannon, I should have had him watched; and I have no doubt Mr. Lewis would have done the same, but we both imagined from the fact that there were two police constables at his hotel that he was being watched by the Government. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman ask why Mr. Shannon did not have him arrested? Mr. Shannon had his two policemen on the spot; he had confabulations with him, and what did he do? Why, he got him to make a statutory declaration; and my belief is that Mr. Shannon encouraged him to go away. Why should he have got him to make a statutory declaration if he had imagined Pigott would have appeared on the following Tuesday in the witness-box? In that case, where was the necessity for the declaration? Pigott told me he was sent to me to give me opportunities for obtaining certain papers that were in his house. But Pigott sent a telegram to his servant in Dublin to destroy all the compromising papers that might have passed between him and Houston in the negotiations. Is not that sufficient, and ought not the insinuations to be directed against Mr. Shannon and not against me? Pigott then goes to Spain, and immediately afterwards telegraphs back, not to me, but to Mr. Shannon, and says—"Here I am; send me what you promised me." This being so, I think the Home Secretary would do well not to indulge in insinuations against me. The Attorney General has denounced my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby because he disapproved of the apology that was tendered by the Attorney General in Court on behalf of the *Times*. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby did use strong language with regard to that apology, and I hope he will not withdraw one word of it. Every single word he uttered was justified; and the Attorney General thinks he has answered my right hon. Friend when he says, "I am the author of the apology." The rapturous cheers which burst from hon. Gentlemen opposite at this extraordinary *argumentum ad hominem* were perfectly astounding. I do not care whether the Attorney General, or Mr. Soames, or the *Times*, or Mr. Walter did it. I say that the apology was a most disgraceful and sneaking apology. I go further, and say that that apology was not a frank confession or admission that the letters were forgeries. It evaded this, and implied that some of them were forgeries. What did the Attorney General say today? He said he went to the extreme limit of his duty in the language he had used. What does that mean? Does it imply that the Attorney General is prepared frankly to admit that these letters were forgeries or does it not? He said he went to the extreme limit of his duty in the language he used. Really we ought to understand this. Did the hon. and learned Gentlemen fully and absolutely admit that these letters were forgeries, one and all, or did he not. [*Ministerial cries of* "No."] Then listen to what the Court said—the Court appointed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and consisting of three eminent Judges. These Judges have declared them, one and all, to be forgeries. Gentlemen do not understand that. The counsel for the defence were prepared with many and many other proofs. These proofs were stopped by the Court, because the Court said they were already proved to be forgeries. ("No.") Some Members of this House are absolutely shouting "No;" they do not believe they were forgeries, and they will not admit it. What justice can any Irishman expect when we are told that we waste time in this debate? I say we are justified in having occupied the three days by having got this fact from Gentlemen opposite, that they dare not say that my hon. Friend, and the friends of my hon. Friend, the Member for Cork, forged those letters. They will not say that. The insinuation is — only the courage is wanting to assert it—that some were not forged. What is the real truth about the whole of this investigation? Hon. Gentlemen opposite thought that they were sure to win. They thought that success would cover over means the vilest and most contemptible. They were all friends together. I really do not know where one began and the other ended. We had Mr. Walter, the friend of the First Lord of the Treasury; we had Mr. Macdonald, Mr. Anderson; then Mr. Pigott visiting Daly as a private friend; and then Mr. Attorney General; but whether Mr. Attorney General stands at the top, or Mr. Pigott at the bottom, I do not know. But this I know, that when anything occurs in the case, one always throws it upon the shoulders of the other; yet the fact remains that this body of friends were banded together to prove to the country that the forged letters were written by my hon. Friend behind me; and now that the verdict of the Court is delivered we have gentlemen like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London—for I heard him [Sir Robert Fowler indicated assent] say "No." Why has not the right hon. Gentleman the courage to get up and say it? I will tell him why. Because then it would be absolutely necessary, even for Gentlemen on that side of the House, to vote that there had been a breach of privilege; the right hon. Gentleman would be removed from the Bar, and he would be punished according to the rules of the House, and according to the contrition which he showed. I challenge any Gentleman on that side of the House, not to evade his responsibility by crying "No, no," and that sort of thing. I challenge any man there to get up and to say that which in reality they assert by crying "No, no." Many Gentlemen on that side will think that they are wanting in a vestige of courage to say it. We are told that we ought to submit a Vote of no Confidence to those hon. Gentlemen opposite. No; we do not go from Pontius to Pilate. [*Laughter.*] I apologise to the learned Gentleman—from Pontius Pilate to Caiaphus. We want to appeal to Cæsar. Blame us as much as you like about obstruction in this part of the

House, you may depend upon it that we intend to do our best in the House, just as we are doing our best out of the House, to force you to dissolve. We do not treat it as alone a political question —we consider it a question which concerns the honour of the country. Gentlemen who have made such base and such calmunious charges against our colleagues here, Gentlemen who now in defiance of the decision of a Court of law, maintain those assertions, should be at least driven from power, and the people should have the right to decide at once whether they will be there any longer as their rulers.

Mr. PARNELL (Cork): Mr. Courtney, I did not intend to intervene in this debate to-night, and I only do so now in a very few words, and for a specific object and purpose. I was not tempted, Sir, to intervene in this debate by the more than equivocal language used by the Leader of the Conservative Party in this country, and the head of Her Majesty's Government when addressing a public meeting the other day. What Lord Salisbury then said will have to be left to the judgment of the country. If he, as the Leader of his party and the head of the Government, chooses to pin any relic of his faith to any one of these letters, the punishment and the consequences will be upon his head and upon the head of his supporters. But, Sir, in the language of the Attorney General to-night, and in the shouts of some of his supporters, there has been some faint echo of Lord Salisbury's language —I am happy to say for the credit of this House only a faint echo. The hon. Member who has just spoken asked whether there was anybody in the House who still believed that the facsimile letter, or any one of these letters, had not been disproved. The Attorney General said that he went to the very verge of his duty—to the very extremity of his duty — in withdrawing these letters, because they felt that they had no longer any proof of them. What then happened? After they had been withdrawn I was put into the box, and I testified on oath that I had not signed, written, authorized the writing, authorized the signature, or ever heard of any of these letters before they were published. That testimony the Attorney General listened to, and he did not venture to put to me a single question. He is a lawyer; he knows the rules of law, though perhaps not of conduct. But I understand that as a lawyer he was bound by his reception of evidence and by his failure to cross-examine me—I mean that he was bound by my evidence. Is that true or is it not? Was the hon. and learned Gentleman, having listened to my testimony with regard to these letters, and having failed to cross-examine me upon that testimony—was he bound by that testimony there or was he not? And if he was bound by it there, why is he not bound by it here? And why was his Leader not bound by it when he treated these infamous productions as matters that were still in doubt? Well, Sir, I have risen for the purpose of asking this question of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Is there any one of them who will get up in his place, or sitting in his place, by a shake of his head or a nod, or a word, will venture to say he believes that there is any doubt whatever as to the forgery of these letters which have been alleged to have been written and signed by me?

Sir H. JAMES rose to address the Committee.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (interposing) said: Mr. Courtney, I rise to a point of order. I beg to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that it was evident to the whole Committee that the question was asked by my hon. Friend the senior Member for Northampton whether any Member in this House still doubted that the letters attributed to my hon. Friend the Member for Cork were forgeries. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London by signs patent to everybody in this House signified, and many others signified, that they did. If you, Sir, rule me out of order I resume my seat. The hon. Member for the City of London, who now seems to assent to my statement, signified he still was prepared to say that some of the letters attributed to my hon. Friend were genuine. I call upon him to withdraw that statement, or ——(*after a pause*) Coward!

*__The CHAIRMAN__: Order, order! The incident of the question put by the hon. Member for Northampton occurred some time ago, and there were no doubt responses made which I need not characterize. The hon. Member for Cork afterwards rose to make his statement, and he invited any hon. Member to make a declaration or a sign of that character. To that there was no response. With that the incident closed. Now I must call upon the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool to withdraw the word which I heard him use.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR: After your condemnation, I have not the least objection or hesitation in withdrawing the expression.

*SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury): Sir, a Resolution was passed in this House in the month of June, 1858, which declares that no Member is entitled to take any part in any discussion arising, directly or indirectly, out of any matter in which he has been engaged as counsel. I believe that it was the desire to carry out the spirit of that Resolution that has led my hon. and learned Friends who are Members of the House, and also Members of the English and Irish Bars, and who have represented interests hostile to those which I have advocated before the Commission, to take no part either by word or by vote in this debate. I should ill repay that conduct, which appears to me to be worthy of recognition, if I were to throw myself into the debate in any ordinary sense of those words. But I ask the Committee to allow me to occupy their attention for a very few minutes while—within the limits of what I wish to call a personal explanation—I deal with those matters with which I am personally connected. I am very sensible of the great and, I fear, unmerited courtesy which my hon. Friend the Member for Derby has extended to me in his speech this evening, and I shall endeavour to speak of my right hon. Friend in the same courteous tone. I am bound to take part in this discussion for one reason which is not entirely personal to myself. The charge made against the Attorney General is a charge made against him as counsel conducting the interests of the *Times* newspaper. There have been, and are still, six counsel to whom the interests of that newspaper have been entrusted. Four of them are absent from this House. They are men who are dependent upon their profession, and dependent upon the position they hold in that profession; and they are subjected to the same charge as the Attorney General. It is scarcely to be treated as a matter of degree; if charges are made against the Attorney General of dishonourable conduct while taking charge of the interests of the *Times*, those who are his colleagues are charged equally with him. ["No, no!"] I hear a voice say "No;" but I am sure that the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Longford will say that they are. And for this reason. If the Attorney General has committed one dishonourable act, or has taken one dishonourable course, even if he took the primary responsibility, those who are associated with him can and ought to dissociate themselves from any further dealing or responsibility, so long as they think he has acted in a dishonourable or improper way. On the part of these four absent men, I am requested to say that they stand or fall by the course which the Attorney General has taken. They will dissever themselves from nothing that he has done; and now, watching all that he has done, they claim that, if the House passes this vote for the reduction of the salary of the Attorney General, the censure shall not rest upon him alone, and one and all declare that they will stand by his side, and ask to share in his condemnation. If it had been said that the Attorney General should not engage in private practice, I and my colleagues would not have had anrthing to say to that; and if it had been suggested that he should not, in the exercise of his discretion, have taken any particular brief, that is not a question which we need have entered upon; but when the charge is, in the language of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, that the Attorney General has acted in an unbecoming manner as an advocate, and when instances are given of that conduct which is termed dishonourable and discreditable to any member of the Bar, those who are the colleagues of the Attorney General will immediately protest. That portion of the charges which were contained in the earlier part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General has answered, and I need not, therefore, refer to them. But I wish particularly to address myself to the *gravamen* of the indictment which, I think, was contained in the latter portion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. And let me first say that this is an inconvenient tribunal to submit the decision of professional conduct to. In the first place, if the Attorney General has behaved discreditably or dishonourably, the Commission which is sitting had and has the opportunity to check, and censure, and condemn, and would condemn; but beyond that everyone of us, my colleagues and myself, are subject to a Court of discipline, which is such that, if it errs at all, it is generally on the ground of severity; and if there has been one act of the Attorney General's which has been so discreditable to him that a Vote of Censure ought to be passed upon him by this House, the Court of discipline to which I refer would be the first to pass censure after full investigation, and make him bear the penalty of his conduct. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney is a member of that Court of discipline, and if he, who has heard every word uttered by the Attorney General in this inquiry, if he has the slightest reason to say that dishonourable and discreditable conduct has been indulged in, if he can, upon his own authority, charge the Attorney General with having deviated from his duty, and there is an impartial Court and a certain tribunal to deal with the matter. But, Sir, the right hon. Member for Derby has made certain charges in this House. His first charge against the Attorney General, as I understand it, was that when he had learned that the witness Pigott was a man whose character would not bear investigation, he ought to have risen before the Commission, and said, "I withdraw the charges and acquit the accused." Those are the words of the right hon. Gentleman. I will see presently how he minimised them. That was the charge, and it is a charge against every counsel engaged with the Attorney General. The right hon. Gentleman says it was our duty after consultation to rise before the Judges and say:

> "We withdraw the charge; we adjudge these letters to be forgeries, and we ask you to acquit the accused."

I think I am right in stating that that is the first charge in this indictment. Let us examine it. I am afraid that many hon. Members of this House will not understand the position so well as hon. Gentlemen who are members of my profession. But what is the position of affairs? The Commission was appointed by Statute to investigate these matters, including the authenticity of the letters, and bear in mind before the Commission the admissions a witness with respect to his past life would be made the subject of severe cross-examination. That being the case, my right hon. Friend affirms that we, the counsel for one of the parties, ought to have sat in judgment upon this man and said,

> "We will not allow him to go into the witness-box; we will withdraw him from the position in which he would have to answer questions, there shall be no cross-examination, and we will leave the public for ever in doubt whether these letters were forgeries or not."

That, Sir, was a course which it was not possible for any counsel to take. It was a course we never could pursue, and the Committee will see the reason for it. What should we have been doing? We should have been sending a witness away, with the result that the full and complete truth could never be known. We should have been asking that our judgment should be accepted instead of the judgment of the Court. What would the hon. Member for the City of Cork have said in his own interests, and in his desire to show, as I think he has shown, that he had not written these letters—what would he have said if we had withdrawn the witness from whose mouth it is alleged that the hon. Member was to extract the admission that the letters were forgeries? The first persons to protest would have been the hon. Member for the City of Cork and his immediate friends. They would have had the right to say, "This course shall not be pursued." If, then, the Attorney General had taken that course, he would have been rightly arraigned in this House and elsewhere. It would have been said of him that he sent this witness away to prevent disclosure. The course would be one which public opinion would never have tolerated, and which no counsel would have attempted or dared to take. What would it have involved? It would have involved the assertion that in our judgement based upon the mere statements contained in two letters of discreditable as a Nationalist journalist, this man had been guilty of forgery. We should have been sitting as judges upon this man, and virtually have sentenced him to penal servitude for life as a forger. But even to that man, as to the most guilty, justice is due. We have no right to act as his judges, and say, "Because this or that letter has been written you are guilty." Yet the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman is that we ought to done all this; that the Attorney General should have said, "I withdraw the charges and acquit the accused."

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg your pardon for interrupting you, but allow me to point out that you might have called him at once.

SIR H. JAMES: I will deal with that in one moment. When the right hon. Gentleman is attacking the character of men to the death, he thinks little of minimizing the atoms of his charge, and shifting them from a principle down to a date. I trust that my right hon. Friend, instead of indulging in gestures and interruptions, will be good enough to understand that a principle remains the same whether it is to be applied in October or December. I am asking whether at any time counsel, whose judgments must be fallible, ought to have sat in judgment upon this man and convicted him of being a forger? Upon what grounds were we to say this? The right hon. Gentleman says you knew from his letter this man says his cross-examination would be injurious to his evidence in chief. And the hon. Member for Northampton elicited loud cheers by reading part of Pigott's letter of May 22; but the hon. Member omitted to read the context, which is—

> "I wish you to understand that, if called upon to give evidence, I shall refuse, no matter what the consequence may be."

Then the writer went on to say that in those circumstances it was certain that if the proceedings relied for success upon his testimony the case would fail. The attitude of the man was that he would not go into the witness-box at all, as he did not wish to reveal certain information. Then he said, "My character as a Nationalist journalist in the past will not bear investigation," and it is because the Attorney General and his colleagues did not upon those statements, and those statements only, rush to the conclusion that the man was a forger and ought to be handed over to justice that we are now charged with dishonourable conduct. I cannot conceive that any person who knows the duty of a counsel, or any one would wish that we should act unfairly to any man, however lost he may be to a sense of right in his conduct, and that we should possibly have acted in the manner in which my right hon. Friend suggested. I will go further, and I say now that if Pigott had gone to any advocate and said, "I have forged these letters, what am I to do?" the answer would have been, "Go into the box and say you have done it, and then take the consequence of your assertion." No counsel would have told him not to go into the box, and not to prove the innocence of the accused. Well, Sir, strangely enough, my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, with all his great experience, suggests that the proper course was, that this man should not have been given—by the advocates of the *Times*—an opportunity of giving evidence.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I never said that Pigott should not have been put into the box. I always thought that Pigott should have been called, but his proper character ought to have been stated to the Court. If it was thought proper that the truth should be known, Pigott should have been called, and he should have been called as soon as it was known that he was untrustworthy, and the Member for Cork ought not to have been kept for two months under the charge of having written the letters.

SIR HENRY JAMES: This is the fifth time my right hon. Friend has referred to the question of time. My right hon. Friend cannot and shall not escape. When he charged us with dishonourable conduct my right hon. Friend should either stick to his charges or withdraw them. My right hon. Friend said distinctly that the duty of the Attorney General was to rise in Court and say, "I withdraw the charges and acquit the accused;" and now he says that, having withdrawn the charges and acquitted the accused, we were afterwards to call Pigott to support the charges. I tell my right hon. Friend that that statement of his will be received with derision tomorrow morning by the whole of the profession who know the late Solicitor

General. Now, Sir, I will take my right hon. Friend's view, with all his great professional experience as a law officer of the Crown. I can see him as a law officer of the Crown rising and saying to the tribunal, "I am going to call a witness, and I ask the tribunal to determine whether what he is about to say is true or false. You are judges of the facts, but I tell you that the witness is a man of bad character, that we do not believe a word he says, and we will tell you that you ought not to believe him." That is the second proposition by virtue of which my right hon. Friend charges the counsel for the *Times* with grossly dishonourable and disreputable conduct. The third charge of my right hon. Friend is that it was the duty of the Attorney General personally to have made inquiries as to Pigott's character and antecedents. That is not quite compatible with his previous argument that the letters disclosed so much that no inquiry was needed, and that on the strength of the letters the charges ought to have been abandoned. My right hon. Friend now says that, as the letters did not disclose enough, the Attorney General ought to have added to them by a personal inquiry as to the antecedents of Pigott. My right hon. Friend has acted as counsel in many cases; has he ever made inquiries, as counsel, into the antecedents of any witness he might call? He may have done many things in Party struggles and for political purposes, and surely one who so nearly approached the head of the English Bar should not have resorted to such an argument as this—and when my right hon. Friend was a practising Member of the English Bar he would not have used such an argument as this—which he knows every member of his profession will hear of with astonishment. These are the charges on which, as far as professional conduct is concerned, my right hon. Friend attacked the Attorney General. He attacks him for not making this communication. I am not going to make any observation as to whether Mr. Soames offered the information which the hon. and learned Member for Hackney appears to have received at some time. I am glad to gather that my right hon. Friend had no communication with the Member for Hackney, and I tell my right hon. Friend that the character of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney will rise higher to-morrow when it is learnt that he, neither directly nor indirectly, has taken any part in bringing this charge against the Attorney General. I am happy to think that whilst my hon. and learned Friend knew how to gain a victory—and he did gain one—his conduct will bear contrast with that of his colleagues who do not seem to know how to use it. I am not about to make any appeal to the Members of the House. I am glad to know that this arraignment is to be followed by a verdict. Late in the evening a motion has been made to reduce the Vote, and consequently there will be a Division. I am making no appeal to the Members of the House, but there are some Members of the profession of the Attorney General sitting behind me. [Mr. A. MORLEY: Hear, hear.] The late Secretary to the Treasury ironically says, "Hear, hear." There are many ways in which the honour of our profession may be maintained, but there is not one of our profession who does not know that we have never had a leader who has been more desirous of truthfully doing his duty than the man who has been attacked to-night. I ask the members of the profession to show my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General no favour to-night. Let them all vote according to their belief. Is there one of you who believes the suggestion that the Attorney General is a cozening knave? Is there one of you, true Liberals as you may be, who does not deplore that Party exigencies have driven this question so far?

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle): We, on this side of this House, listened to the speech of my right hon. and learned Friend (Sir H. James) with special interest on the occasion, because he spoke on behalf of a profession of which he is himself a very distinguished ornament. Into the controversy as to professional conduct, it would not be proper for me, a mere nominal member of the profession, to enter; but I am constrained to state that Sir Charles Russell ["Order"]—the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney—

authorizes us to say that he is entirely in accord with the action we have taken. [Hon. Members:—Where is he?] The Chief Secretary for Ireland asks—"Where is he?" [Mr. A. J. BALFOUR:—No; I did not.] This is not only what he authorizes us to say, but it was what he has repeatedly said in the Court before the Judges. How many times has he complained of the way in which the Attorney General has presented the case? Again and again he complained of the unprofessional way in which the case was presented. ["No."] I repeat that again and again the hon. Member for South Hackney complained of the want of fairness which characterized the conduct of the Attorney General. But we are not here to-night to settle the etiquette of Inns of Court. We have had a very exciting debate, and we had some painful incidents. We had the incident with reference to the hon. Member for Mayo. I shall give no opinion on that, but I am disappointed at the impatience shown by hon. Members opposite, who are, after all, Englishmen, with hon. Members below the Gangway who are the accused persons. Surely after nine years, during which time they have been labouring under these accusations, it can not be wondered at if they give way in the excitement of debate to a little impatience. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division (Mr. Chaplin) said that the speech of the right hon. Member for Derby was received in a chilly manner on this side of the House, and he contrasted that chilliness of manner with the rapturous cheers with which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite received the *apologia* of the Attorney General. Yes; but the whole point of the debate turns on one incident—when the hon. Member for Cork challenged his opponents to show even by gesture that they believed the forged letters, which the Attorney General euphemistically calls even now the facsimile letters were written by him. I regret to say that the hon. Member for the City of London, who has now disappeared, and who was prominent in this matter previously—even he made no sign under that challenge; and I am glad to notice that under the challenge of the hon. Member for Cork we all admitted that there is no answer to the challenge. Apart from that we need not go behind the manly and straightforward declaration of my right hon. and learned Friend (Sir H. James) that nobody believes—except the Prime Minister—that my hon. Friend could possibly have written those letters. The Attorney General read a passage from the charge of the Lord Chief Justice in "O'Donnell *v.* Walter," the drift of which was that there were other charges still pending of a character equally serious as the issue of the letters. Is there one of those charges which was not brought before the House in January or February, 1883, by the late Mr. Forster? There is not one, and yet, although the hon. Member for Cork was under those charges, Lord Carnarvon and the Tory Party went into a confederacy with him. ["No."] You may say "No," but Lord Carnarvon will not say "No." ["Yes he will, he has denied it again and again."] I do not wonder at your anger when this is mentioned. Hon. Members opposite will not deny that their own Viceroy went twice and had interviews with the man who was labouring under those very charges which the hon. and learned Member said were so much more serious than the forged letters. For my part I should have liked to avoid a violent personal issue of this kind, and I am not desirous of finishing this debate in a spirit of personal opposition to the hon. and learned Member beyond what the necessities of the case demands.

But I have said, on a platform, not long ago when I had the honour to sit side by side with my hon. Friend the Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell), that the apology in the *Times* was mean, shabby, and unmanly, and I must say nothing has amazed me more, considering the estimation in which I was glad to hold the hon. and learned Gentleman, than to find that he, after all, was the author of that mean, shabby, and unmanly apology. Remember what the circumstances are. A Member who has held an important position in this House has a very grave charge made against him, so grave that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham said it was the charge, and if that charge was disposed of all the rest would be of no consequence. My right hon. Friend said on the 1st of August, 1888—

> "If the *Times* fails to maintain its principal charges, I do not think much importance will be attached to the other charges. Any attempt, as it appears to me, on the part of the *Times* to put aside those principal charges, or not to put them in the forefront, will redound to their discredit."

—the forefront meant about the 66th sitting—

> "I don't think the hon. and learned Gentleman need fear in the slightest degree that the charges against himself and his colleagues can be or will be ignored."

Remember the situation in which the apology was tendered. The hon. Member for Cork had a charge brought against him which would have damned him in his political career if it had been proved. That charge was withdrawn after it had hung over the hon. Member for months and years, and this is what the Attorney General said—

> "I now, on behalf of those whom we represent, ask permission to withdraw from your consideration the question of the genuineness of the letters which have been submitted to you, the authenticity of which has been denied, with a full acknowledgment that after the evidence which has been given we are not entitled to say that they are genuine. My Lords, although it is possible that any expression of regret made by me in making this statement may be misinterpreted"—what ungenerous language—"those whom I represent request me to express their sincere regret that those letters were published."

Now, if we want a measure of the shabbiness, meanness, and unmanliness of the apology, we find it lower down in the column where the *Times* itself expressed its own view of the extent to which their calumnies had been found out. I commend these words to hon. Gentlemen opposite. It is their own oracle speaking—

> "Mr. Parnell having in the witness-box stated that the letters attributed to him were forgeries we accept in every respect the truth of that statement. This expression of regret we need hardly say includes also the letters falsely attributed to Mr. Egan, Mr. Davitt, and Mr. O'Kelly."

If I want any justification for a vote showing disapproval of the conduct of the hon. and learned Gentleman, I should find it in the fact that after the charge was withdrawn by the authors of it, he had no more to say—not a word of regret to express to the hon. Member for Cork—than the poor words I have just read to the House. Now, there are one or two points raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby which were not touched in the least degree by the hon. and learned Gentleman. In the first place, he made no attempt to answer the position taken up by my right hon. Friend—that he ought never on any account to have placed himself in a position which disabled him from acting, as he might have been called upon to act, as Public Prosecutor, either against the proprietors of the *Times* or against Gentlemen below the Gangway. That is a most important, a vital proposition, going to the root of the Vote to-night; but on that the hon. and learned Gentleman had nothing more to say than that possibly his conduct might not have been altogether prudent. It was much more than that. It was a grievous error of judgment, and it is for that error of judgment, among other things, that I am going to vote for the reduction of the hon. and learned Gentleman's salary. With reference to the conduct of the hon. and learned Gentleman in the matter of Pigott, as we now know, he knew for the first time of Pigott's letter in the middle of December. That letter he kept in his own bosom, so far as the Court and opposing counsel were concerned, for a period of two months and a-half. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury seems to think it would have been very unfair if there had been any premature declaration of the existence of the document; but my right hon. Friend seems to forget that during those two months and a-half the hon. Member for Cork was lying under this charge, a charge which my right hon. Friend has to-night fully and manfully withdrawn. Supposing Pigott had said to Mr. Soames, "I am a forger," would the hon. and learned Gentleman then have felt bound to go on with the case on the footing on which it then stood? Pigott did not say that; but what he said was enough to have caused the Attorney General or Mr. Soames, or anyone else concerned on behalf of the *Times*, to at least set inquiries on foot as to the character of their chief witness. I happen to know—I suppose most of us do—that the correspondent of the *Times* in Dublin is a certain Dr. Patton, editor of the *Dublin Express*, so that the readers of the *Times* get their Irish news through the editor of the high Tory and Orange organ in Ireland. Those concerned for the *Times* had nothing to do but to send a telegram to Dr. Patton, who knew every particular as to the character of Pigott. I have been a journalist, and I know perfectly well, from my own experience, from attempts of Pigott to have relations with me—(a laugh)—Oh, not sinister relations, although I have no doubt Pigott would have written me a Nationalist article, or have forged, if you please, a document discrediting the Nationalist party, if I had been as credulous as Mr. Macdonald. I knew that there was no man in Dublin whose character was more notorious. That is really the *gravamen* of the charge made by my right hon. Friend—that having Pigott's own assertion that he could not go into the box, the hon. and learned Gentleman, and those concerned for the *Times*, took no trouble whatever to find out what manner of man he was. If they had taken any trouble in that direction they would have found that the whole of their fabric rested on a foundation that was absolutely rotten. Again, the hon. and learned Gentleman never dealt with the challenge of my right hon. Friend to explain his statement on July 4 that the authenticity of the letters had been tested by experts and in other ways. The hon. and learned Gentleman has the chance even now, but up till now he has never dealt with the point. He has never explained in what other way he meant the *Times* had tested the authenticity of the letters.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: As counsel for the *Times* and until some later day my mouth is absolutely closed.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY: I am amazed that the hon. and learned Gentleman should plead his mouth was closed. This really sheds a most extraordinary light on professional etiquette. Are we to understand that supposing he knew that Pigott was a forger his mouth was closed? My point is this—he said the *Times* had tested the authenticity of the letters by the examination of experts, and in other ways. Well, what privilege of counsel is there when I ask "What were the other ways?" Are we to understand that he was at liberty to tell the country that the letters had been tested in other ways and yet was not at liberty to say what other ways had been resorted to? We needs must ask ourselves what "other ways" were resorted to; we ask ourselves was the Attorney General justified by any sort of canon of professional etiquette, or in any way, in putting forward the statement that other tests were resorted to, when it appears, as a matter of fact, other ways had not been resorted to. I will not keep the Committee any longer, but I think my assertion is true, that the most important articles in the charge made by my right hon. Friend have not in the slightest degree been met by the Attorney General. One point which you thought he had made, and the only point, was that he had given either a copy or intelligence of the existence of Pigott's self-abnegating letter, but that point loses significance when you remember this was done only after Mr. Soames had in his evidence alluded to the existence of this letter, and my hon. and learned Friend (Sir C. Russell) had called for its production. That is the only point made on which you exultingly thought he had scored. As I have said, I had no intention of taking part in this discussion, and I am only using unpremeditated words. I feel our discussion of to-night and the three days' controversy to which it is the temporary and provisional end, will be followed by many other discussions, until we bring you face to face with those who have the right to pronounce judgment upon all this. This marks a very important stage in a long controversy I have watched the controversy very closely and vigilantly before I came into the House and since I have sat here· The first vote I ever gave in the House, I gave in support of a Bill brought forward by the hon. Member for Cork—I think there were 53 or 55 of us in one lobby—and from that date, which is exactly six years ago, there has been no pause in the movement, which has been all in one direction. We were 55 then, we are now six or seven times as many. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary knows as well as I do that there has been no pause or check in the flow of the stream, and the tide is rising swiftly. The discussion we are upon to-night affecting the character of my hon. Friend the leader of the Irish Party has by the admission of the hon. and learned Member for Bury (Sir H. James) cleared him from one of the most damaging charges ever made against him, and shows we have turned one of the sharpest corners in our long and arduous journey. I wonder you do not see it. I wonder that hon. Gentlemen, instead of indulging in passionate cheers, where any hope is held out to them that possibly some shred or fragment of the charges made against my hon. Friend may prove to be true—I wonder they do not ask themselves whether they are not fighting a hopeless battle, and whether it would not be better for the interest of unfortunate, distracted Ireland, and for this unfortunate and rather distracted House, that they should face the facts, that they should abandon this mood of fierce, bitter political passion against those who are our colleagues, and whom you insist on retaining as our colleagues; and whether it is worth while for you very much longer—I would give you as much time as is necessary to save your political honour—whether in your hearts you believe it is possible for you much longer to persist in the unfortunate course upon which you have embarked. Whatever the result of the division may be—and for my part I do not care in the least about it—[*Laughter*]—no, I do not care about the division—[*Laughter*]—hon. Gentleman need not laugh very hilariously at that, because, as I said the other day, and say it now—not in a harsh, offensive sense—the division will be won by a fraudulently obtained majority. I feel sure that if we are here—we shall not all be here, I hope—six years hence, those of us who are here will find, looking back, that this debate, which clears the character of the hon. Member for Cork and his friends, marks the point of the decisive and final advance.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir EDWARD CLARKE, Plymouth): I hope before the division is taken the Committee will indulge me with a few minutes and allow me, more for the sake of the personal and professional relations between myself and my hon. and learned Friend than for any necessity for defending him against this attack, to associate myself with him in defence. In the speech we have just listened to there were, I think, certain premeditated sentences that have done duty elsewhere, although they found their way into the peroration of that unpremeditated speech. In that speech there was very little that touched the question we are debating. The right hon. Gentleman charged my hon. and learned Friend with being mean, shabby, and dishonest in framing the apology for the *Times*, and we have been treated again to suggestions which I thought had been absolutely demolished, not only by the Attorney General, but by the hon. and learned Member for Bury, of a conspiracy to suppress what had taken place in regard to Pigott; but what more was there in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman? He wandered off into all sorts of topics, and revived that which I had thought was the almost forgotten fable about Lord Carnarvon and the confederacy with the Conservative Party. Is it necessary once more to remind him that when these allegations about a confederacy between the Conservatives and the Irish Party were first set on foot, not only a letter was written by the late "Whip" of the Conservative Party, denying that any such confederacy existed, but a letter was also published by the hon. Member for Cork denying in the most emphatic terms that any such confederacy existed. Yet the right hon. Gentleman attempts to quote and give back to public currency, as if it were accepted truth, this statement of a confederacy with Lord Carnarvon and the Tory Party.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I never said that. I was extremely careful to limit my proposition to this, that Lord Carnarvon met twice, and had an interview in a room with, the hon. Member who is the subject of these charges, which I say is important.

*Sir E. CLARKE: I though I heard a statement as to the Tory Party. I accept at once in all completeness the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, but what does the accusation come to? Does he suggest that it was discreditable for Lord Carnarvon to have met the hon. Member for Cork? I am going to put a perfectly fair interpretation upon his words; he does not say it was discreditable on the part of Lord Carnarvon to meet the hon. Member, but he said there was some inconsistency, because it implied a suggestion that Lord Carnarvon made those proposals to the hon. Member for Cork which Lord Carnarvon has again and again in specific terms denied.

Several hon. Members: No, no. Never denied.

*Sir E. CLARKE: The right hon. Gentleman says the House should view with leniency and indulgence the exhibition of strong feeling on the part of Irish Members, and I quite agree it is impossible that they should be subject to charges of this kind without being entitled to express strong feeling; and he says that there is all the more excuse and justification for that exhibition of feeling, tumultuous and occasionally turbulent as it may have been, seeing the accusations to which they have been exposed for nine years.

Mr. MORLEY: Seven.

*Sir E. CLARKE: I will not pin the right hon. Gentleman to nine years, seven is quite sufficient. I forget what date it was in 1882 when we heard the right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt) make his accusations across the floor of the House against his present allies. Take it as seven years, and during the greater part of those seven years, who are the men who have made the bitterest and most violent accusations against hon. Members below the Gangway opposite? If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle waits to find a catena of phrases—a whole magazine of vituperation against Members below the Gangway—he has only to ask the right hon. Member very near him to lend him that treasured volume in which, no doubt, some friendly hand inserts the speeches made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. This is no mere *tu quoque*. If the right hon. Gentleman says these accusations have existed for seven years, it is only fair we should hand over to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby the greater portion of the credit of exciting the present feeling. How curious is the debate now taking place! Does the Committee quite realize what is being done? The hon. Member for Wexford has proposed a reduction in the salary of my hon. and learned Friend, and he was supported in anticipation by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division (Mr. T. P. O'Connor). Both these hon. Gentlemen are being prosecuted by the Attorney General; they are being prosecuted in this sense, they are defendants in an action in which the Attorney General is appearing in circumstances he has explained to the House, as counsel for those who are putting their case before a judicial tribunal that has been formed for the purpose.

An Hon. Member: Private prosecution or State trial?

*Sir E. CLARKE: I am going to deal with that in a few minutes. As a matter of fact, there has been established a great judicial tribunal, and to that tribunal has been handed over for decision matters which, however they may ultimately be decided, are no doubt of very great importance. No decision has yet been given on any single point of the accusations. This tribunal decided in what way the inquiry should be conducted; decided to call upon those who had made themselves principally responsible for the accusations to be inquired into to formulate their statements, and bring forward their witnesses in the first instance. This tribunal decided that the names of those who were charged should be given, and there is a list of names in this book of those who are included in the charges and allegations. Among these names are those of the hon. Members for Wexford and for the Scotland Division of Liverpool.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: What book is it?

*Sir E. CLARKE: The Report of the proceedings before the Royal Commission. These two hon. Members propose to reduce the salary of the Attorney General. But this is not all. We have had a speech from the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who has been flitting hither and thither to-night. He came in, made his speech, and departed; and I will say no more than this, that he has been under the consideration of the tribunal, and so far as we know he continues to be under the consideration of the tribunal now. I confess when I heard him talk about evidence and cross examination, it did occur to me that many of us would like to cross-examine the hon. Gentleman to get an explanation of certain transactions in relation to this inquiry. Another speech there was from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, who, I persume, is going to give evidence before the Commission, because a piece of evidence has been given before the Commission affecting him. He took the opportunity—I suppose it is a privilege of his great position—to write to the newspapers denying the statement made by a witness; but that statement was made on oath before the Commission, and the Commissioners, before they can consider it denied and refuted, must undoubtedly require the right hon. Gentleman to give his evidence. I confess I have listened with great amusement to the right hon. Gentleman—amusement tempered with a little indignation—as he referred to various matters in his speech. He continually talked of the "man Houston," and mentioned him by name. After speaking of the "miserable wretches" with whom the Attorney General had had to deal, he denounced Houston for having burned correspondence. Well, he will have an opportunity of denying the statement made on oath, that in 1883 he advised or suggested the destruction of certain documents about the Kilmainham Treaty.

Mr. PARNELL: No such statement was made.

*Sir E. CLARKE: It was made early in November. I am absolutely correct.

An hon. Member: Quote.

Sir W. HARCOURT: No such statement as that was made in March.

*Sir E. CLARKE: The right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. The statement was denied by him in a letter to the newspapers, but the statement was made by Captain O'Shea early in the course of the proceedings before the Commission, that in 1883, when there was talk of a Committee of the House to inquire into matters connected with the Kilmainham Treaty, the right hon. Gentleman said the documents were to be, or had been, destroyed.

Mr. PARNELL: No such thing.

*Sir E. CLARKE: The name of a more illustrious person even than this right hon. Gentleman was mentioned as having been consulted. I am only pointing out the peculiar position of those who are making these accusations against the Attorney General, and I ask the Committee to note the way in which these accusations have changed their form from time to time. First, the accusation was that the Attorney General ought not to have taken the brief, and my hon. and learned Friend in his speech has answered that accusation. ["No!"] I do not say he has answered it to the satisfaction of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; my hon. and learned Friend would need miraculous power to do that; but he has explained, and it is perfectly clear that before this became matter for a Special Commission, he held a brief in the private action of "O'Donnell *v.* Walter," and so became cognizant of all the proceedings in respect to which the Commission was set up. When the Commission was established, is it to be supposed the Attorney General was not entitled to appear for his former clients, who were putting forward the same charges as they had made through his mouth, and supporting them by the same evidence as had been communicated to him? I express no opinion as to the wisdom of the decision he came to, but it cannot be said that there was anything inconsistent with professional honour or political duty in taking the brief. It is suggested that doing so prevented him from doing the work of the Government, and on this I have more right to speak than any man living. I am associated with the Attorney General in the greater part of his official work, and I can testify to his amazing capacity for work—a capacity for work surpassing that of any man I have ever met in my professional career. There never has been the slightest delay in undertaking and discharging the work that had to be done for the Government, and at this moment there is not on my table, nor I believe on that of my hon. and learned Friend, a single set of Government Papers on which our opinions have been asked and not given. Throughout there has not been any interruption in the Court work or advising work of the Attorney General. I do not say that all men could have done this, but exceptional capacity for work on the part of my hon. and learned Friend has accomplished it. Another accusation is not so much against the Attorney General as against the Government. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt) was anxious to refer to this as a State inquiry.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Home Secretary said it.

***Sir E. CLARKE**: The words "State inquiry" were a quotation. When the Commission Bill was before the House I described it as not a judicial tribunal set up to decide between two parties, but a Court of Inquiry set up to inquire into matters of great importance to the State. Now, the right hon. Gentleman says the Court was formed by the Government, the indictment was framed by the Government, and the parties were summoned by the Government. Now, there is no foundation for these statements at all. The Court formed by the Government? It was submitted to the judgment of the House. We know perfectly well that the right hon. Gentleman, in a speech made at Derby the other day, said the Court consisted of "Judges of the highest and most dignified impartiality." Yes; we will remind him of that by-and-bye, if the decision of the Court should not be quite to his taste. The Government did not frame the indictment; that was framed by the parties whom the Commission called upon to state their specific charges, and with the charges or the persons named the Government had nothing to do. Throughout, the position of the Government has been a steadily impartial one. The right hon. Gentleman had an opportunity of discussing the formation of the Commission and the powers to be given it. Full powers were given the Commissioners to deal completely with the matters before them, and I absolutely decline to discuss anything that has taken place before the Commission in reference to the charges or even to the letters, which were not part of the charges so much as part of the evidence upon which those charges were to be sustained. ("No.") This is not said to-day for the first time; it has been said throughout. Even upon the letters the Court has expressed no opinion whatever, and I wait until that opinion is expressed. I must say, however, I am extremely glad this discussion has taken place, and especially for the sake of my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General. Although he may not have felt the strain and pressure of accusations of this kind, yet those who have been associated with him for years in professional and political life, as well as in personal friendship, have felt for him; and they have looked forward with great anxiety to this discussion, in the hope it would come quickly before the House, and satisfied that he would give a triumphant and conclusive answer to the charges made against him. Under the fostering influence of speeches from below the Gangway, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby is recovering a little from the pitiable condition to which he was reduced by the reply of the Attorney General. Those who have been in this House will never forget the way in which, when my hon. and learned Friend was answering him, the right hon. Member for Derby interposed and shifted his charges, trying to minimize the meaning, and explain away the terms he had used. We on this side of the House are very glad indeed that an opportunity has been given for this discussion and this vindication, and I almost envy my hon. and learned Friend that he has had, in the hearing of so many of his fellow Members, and, I believe, to their absolute and entire satisfaction, an opportunity of clearing away the calumnious accusations which have been made against him.

***Mr. A. STAVELEY HILL** (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): After what has fallen from the learned Solicitor General, I feel bound to say that I hope it will be clearly understood that my vote to-night will be given with the most thorough accceptance of the statement of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Cork that the letters are rank forgeries.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (North Longford): I rise, not to prolong the debate, but rather to make an appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Cork and to my colleagues. Out of the entire ranks of the Conservative Party opposite only one gentleman has risen to express his opinion that the letters were forged, and by implication his condemnation of the methods used against my hon. Friend the Member for Cork. The learned Solicitor General, who has just sat down, said he could not accept the withdrawal of these letters as anything definite; he suggested that they were only shaken in proof. The Leaders of the Unionist Party, who started the Commission last year, have not one word to say, and the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale, the main pillar of the Government, lies silent to-night like a pike at the bottom of a pond, from which he never emerges except when some favourable occasion is given of coming to the assistance of the Government. Now, Mr. Courtney, my words will be very few, and they will be addressed to my fellow countrymen. This is the first assembly of Gentlemen in the world. These letters are put forward as an accusation involving the grossest and most fearful charges. The learned Solicitor General thinks lightly of them now, although he said on the 23rd July, 1888, that in a civil action, if the libel were proved against the *Times* newspaper, any jury would give most ample damages for the injury—damage sufficient to satisfy the instinct of revenge as well as that of cupidity. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said that these letters constituted the *gravamen* of the charge, and if they were shown to be forgeries, the rest of the case would be so prejudiced that the public would not pay much attention to it. Now, Sir, if anything has been proved as plainly as that two and two make four, it is that the letters were forged, and yet the first nobleman of the land, the Leader of a party of Gentlemen, not of a party of raparees and rapscallions such as that to which I myself belong, alleges that these letters may still be treated as authentic, and to-night an ex-Lord Mayor, who is always put forward as a representative of the Party, has given his adhesion to that statement. If that is the line the First Assembly of Gentlemen in the world takes, what hope of justice have the Irish Members in minor matters? What is the use of our going on any further with this Commission, if now, when the letters have been proved to demonstration to be the basest forgeries, you for Party purposes by your Leader, the Prime Minister of this country, and by your Solicitor General take up this line? And this, I repeat, is the First Assembly of Gentlemen in the world. I do not doubt that before another month has passed, just as Lord Salisbury has declared that these letters may still be genuine, some Conservative Member will come forward and say that the letters have been conclusively proved, and that Pigott has been assassinated in Madrid by an emissary of the hon. Member for Cork. I have a precious relic at home; it consists of my warrant of imprisonment. All I can say is that so little do I care for what the verdict of your Commission may be, that the first thing I propose to do, if I succeed in getting a certificate of acquittal or indemnity, will be to put it under the kitchen grate. Now that the *Times* case is closed, and Irish Members know the worst to be said against them, now that emissaries have been brought from America and the prisons have been emptied of all the perjury and forgery they contain, I appeal to my hon. Friends whether they should not wash their hands of the business, and let their carefully selected tribunal make its Report? Let your Prime Minister and your Attorney General say against us what they please. I have never cared one twopence for the *Times'* charges. I have never read "Parnellism and Crime," and I never intend to do so; but I think that, considering the attitude which has been taken up with regard to our proof of innocence, the dignified attitude for my countrymen to take up, and for their Representatives in the English Parliament to assume, standing independently before the world in regard to these matters, should be one of contempt. That will be my recommendation to my hon. Friends, and that, at all events, is the attitude which I shall take up as far as I am personally concerned. Our treatment by the Attorney General is exactly what I expected from him; the attitude of the Government is exactly what I expected from them, and the action of the noble Lord, the private friend of Houston, was exactly what I expected from him. And as to those men who imagine that we are fighting this fight for Ireland for the sake of a few years or a few days, or for the sake of our private characters, let us leave them to their fond imaginings. Let us go on as our forefathers went on. You who slandered John Mitchell and Smith O'Brien, you who employed that dirty, filthy newspaper, which has betrayed all its traditions; and you who slandered Robert Emmett in his grave; you who slanderd Wolfe Tone; you who put poison in the wine cups of the Irish chieftains, go on—go on with your slanders and moral assassination, go on and do your worst. We, Sir, standing safe in the confidence and faith of our fellow countrymen, will go on raising up the flag of the Irish nationality, and will keep it aloft untarnished, whatever may be the issue of this struggle.

The Committee divided: Ayes 206; Noes 286. (Division list No. 38.)

Original question put and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Resolution reported—

"That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1888 and 1889, the sum of £131,059 14s. 2d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolution agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, That they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, the sum of £3,729,203 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next.

Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, with an amended title; as amended, to be considered upon Monday next.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION.

Resolutions reported.

(1.) "That it is expedient to authorise the redemption of the Consolidated Three per Cent Annuities, and the Reduced Three per Cent Annuities, and the issue out of the Consolidated Fund of the necessary amounts to pay off the principal sums payable to holders of such Stocks."

(2.) "That the sums required for such redemption be raised by the creation of Two and Three-quarters per Cent Consolidated Stock or by borrowing for a limited period, the principal moneys so raised and the interest thereon being charged on the Consolidated Fund."

(3.) "That all expenses incurred in carrying out such redemption of Stock, and for providing for the payment of dividends in certain cases, as well as additional remuneration to the Banks of England and Ireland, be charged on the Consolidated Fund.

(4.) "That provision be made for carrying out the arrangements necessary for such redemption of Stock."

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

MOTION.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

"To provide for the Redemption of the Consolidated Three per Cent Stock and the reduced Three per Cent Stock," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 170.]

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Two o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 6.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [April 2.]

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 25th March, 1889.

LARCENY ACT, 1861, AMENDMENT (USE OF FIREARMS) BILL. (NO. 30.)

A Bill for the further security of the persons of Her Majesty's subjects from personal violence—Was presented by the Earl of Milltown; read 1ª; and to be printed.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Moved, That the Earl Beauchamp be appointed to take the Chair in the Committee of the whole House this day, in the absence of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos from illness.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*); agreed to.

Moved, That the Earl Beauchamp do take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills to-morrow in the absence of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos from illness, except where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*); agreed to.

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE, 1887.

*Lord **STRATHEDEN and CAMPBELL**, in rising to move "That, in the opinion of this House the Colonial Conference of 1887 has led to good results, and ought to be the basis of further measures tending to Imperial security," said: My Lords, the first thing to mention to the House is that some discussion on the proceedings of the Conference was not to be avoided. It seemed to me that it might take place in June or July with advantage. The Colonial Office were not of that opinion, and prevented it. The notice was adjourned to the 12th of November, on which day it was not the pleasure of Her Majesty's Government that the House should assemble. Nor could it be brought forward on any of the isolated Tuesdays, when Bills having precedence wholly occupied your Lordships, and when the ocean travellers or former Viceroys whom the House would wish to hear, were generally absent. I do not touch at present on the circumstances which led me to approach the Blue Books or their theme, as I am anxious to avoid whatever looks like an exordium. It is better to go on at once to the first position of the notice—namely, that the results of the Conference in 1887 were satisfactory. Its main result has been to establish the scheme of naval defence in the Australian waters which had been well elaborated in the despatches of Admiral Tryon, a name well-known in connection with the topic. The local Parliaments have all, or nearly all, accepted the decisions of the Conference. Some minor changes, which relate to bankruptcy and to companies and postage, have been mooted, but have not reached, I think, an actual conclusion. On all of these the noble Lord the Secretary of State for the Colonies must be a far better expositor. By him the Conference was guided; by him the rather intricate agreements as to outlay were determined; by him the subsequent proceedings of the Colonial Parliaments have been habitually scrutinized with every advantage. Let me consider, therefore, the next and last position of the notice, a task to which I shall be painfully and consciously unequal, without the friendly aid and the remarkable indulgence of your Lordships. It is desirable at once to throw some light upon the origin of the movement which led on to the Conference at Westminster. The movement seems to have originated in the war of 1870 between France and Prussia. Soon after it, a publication in the same form as "The Battle of Dorking" came

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

out, to indicate a nearer union of Great Britain and the Colonies as the result of an invasion or disaster, the object being to show that it ought to precede and to prevent, not to repair and follow, a catastrophe of that kind. In 1871 a great discussion took place in the Westminster Palace Hotel, under the auspices of the Duke of Manchester, at which M. de Labilliere, an Australian, read a paper giving the whole argument in favour of what is termed Imperial Federation. M. de Labilliere and the Duke of Manchester may, therefore, be considered as the founders of the system. In 1875 the well-known address of the late Mr. Forster, at Edinburgh, gave uncommon circulation to the subject. It was applauded, and in some degree endorsed, for the time at least, by the noble Earl now sitting just beneath me (the Earl of Derby.) In 1876 Sir Frederick Young sent out a formal treatise in the same direction. But soon a most extraordinary reasoner appeared in a Canadian politician who contributed three articles in 1879 to a celebrated periodical, the *Westminster Review*, which placed on clear foundations and reduced to practical detail the kind of change which Mr. Forster recommended. There cannot be too strong a recognition of that admirable trilogy. Thenceforward, hardly any magazine has left the question unconsidered. Among the strong opponents of the project, Professor Goldwin Smith ought to be mentioned. The voyage of Lord Rosebery round the world, the impressions he brought back, the language he has held, the public dinners he has guided, may be regarded as another stage in the transaction. But the most extraordinary power exerted on the public mind has been that of Mr. Froude and Baron Hubner, who have separately visited the distant regions of the Empire, and published striking views on Federation, without entirely ranking as its advocates. The financial classes were thus so much awakened and excited that the London Chamber of Commerce resolved in 1886 on what might seem at first a startling decision from so respectable and business-like a quarter. They offered a prize to essayists upon it, which was obtained by Mr. Gresswell, a distinguished author of South Africa, and which produced a volume from various contributors of greater value, as they are nearly all of them colonial either by residence or origin. In that volume, which must have reached some Members of the Legislature, the whole subject may be easily investigated. In 1886 also the Colonial Exhibition drew the public gaze towards the problem. In August of that year, directly the present Government was formed, a deputation, led by Mr. (now Lord) Brassey, urged the noble Marquess the First Minister to act in some degree upon the movement. The noble Marquess did not give the deputation an ungenial reception. He did not seem to view it as deputations sometimes have been regarded like "a noun of multitude, which signifies many, but does not signify much." A few weeks after the Queen's Speech referred to the topic. The same autumn saw the famous and frequently alluded to despatch of Mr. Stanhope, the Colonial Secretary, by whom the Conference at Westminster was summoned, but under a restriction that what is termed Imperial Federation should not be debated in it. In 1887 the Conference assembled without Mr. Stanhope, who had reached another post, but with a Chairman in Sir Henry Holland, who is now amongst us by another designation. The proceedings of the Conference are recorded in the volumes now before us, which also contain an interesting speech of Mr. Hoffmeir, the delegate from the Cape of Good Hope, upon the method of arriving at an Imperial revenue. I recommend that speech in some degree—it is to be found at page 463 of the 1st volume—to the attention of your Lordships. It is not without an object I have presumed to touch upon these stages. The Conference proceeded from a movement which it, therefore, stamped with authenticity. But yet the Conference leaves unresolved the leading problem towards which the movement was directed. It cannot, therefore, be contended that the Conference is final.—Indeed, the language of the noble Marquess when he delivered the inaugurating speech, and the language of the noble Lord the Secretary of State in aid repudiated most distinctly all finality of that kind. According to one, it was to be but a starting point; according to the other it was to lead on to many similar proceedings. The Government are only now recalled to their original intention. They are only asked to build on their exertions—not merely to enjoy success when it is possible to utilize it. It should be remembered also that if the movement was deprived of action, its leading object unattained, the Conference would be its sepulchre instead of its encouragement. It has been shown this very aututmn that the movement was not composed, or tranquillized, or satiated by the Conference. It has been loud and energetic since the Conference hasterminated. In Glasgow, Edinburgh, Jedburgh, and other Scottish cities, considerable bodies have assembled in the autumn to demand some further measures of a nature to promote the union of the Empire, beyond the measure which the Conference arrived at. The leading Scottish journal has opened its columns widely to the subject. Again, the League whose members brought about this movement, the League, from which the Conference proceeded, the League, whose action led to the Queen's Speech and the despatch of Mr. Stanhope, survives, but ought to die if the proceedings of the Conference are satisfactory and final. However, it is easy to contend that the necessity for further action rests on grounds less technical and narrow. Apart from India and from the Colonies, who have a basis of their own, dependencies must gradually incline to separation from Great Britain. The experience of our country, of Spain, of Portugal, would point to this conclusion. Adam Smith, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, in their well known works, Viscount Bury in his Exodus of Nations, are all agreed on this inevitable tendency. You could not have three minds acquainted with the subject more remote from one another. Adam Smith, as your Lordships know, was a recluse who spent 10 years at Kirkcaldy in the preparation of his celebrated treatise. Sir George Lewis was an active politician well known to many here. He personally visited none of our dependencies but Malta. Viscount Bury, a much younger man, has had experience and ties upon the other side of the Atlantic. It is remarkable that thinkers placed so differently should all pronounce a similar conclusion on this matter. But not to urge too far the proposition, it may be granted that dependencies of that kind will not leave Great Britain except in the event of war by which their coasts are threatened. When war arrives—as it may always do—the temptation to break off might then be irresistible. The Marquis de Beauvoir, the great French traveller in Australia, a few years back arrived at this conclusion. In Canada we sometimes hear of that which tends to separation. In Queensland the title of the Crown to appoint Governors has been loudly if not universally disputed. In South Africa, Majuba Hill, of which we heard so much from the late Lord Cairns, may be remembered. There is at least a germ which you may call centrifugal in the self-governing dependencies, except, perhaps, New Zealand. Since the Crimean War, there is no criterion to guide us as to the fear of similar contingencies. At that time the power of Great Britain to blockade all hostile ports was thoroughly relied on. We openly declare it ought not now to be so. In the Crimean War the operation against Petropaulouskie not having been remarkably successful, Petropaulouski still survives and menaces the harbours and coaling stations of the British Empire to the South of it. It is clear that in the event of war these great Dependencies may possibly escape us. It is no less clear, however, that Great Britain cannot acquiesce in any unredeemed and unconditional detachment of them. Some 20 years, according to Mr. Froude, who knows much of offices and statesmen, as well as history and philosophy, there was a disposition to do away with Colonies in a quarter where it could not be anticipated. It was an unorthodox, unwholesome mixture of red tape and revolution. But all that has evaporated, before the ill-omened alliance was in any way productive. Another fashion has set in, which Government must recognize. The dominant opinion now amongst all classes is tenacious of every post from Hong Kong to Vancouver's Island. To be reduced to the United Kingdom would be a blow to systematic colonization, which in the days of Sir Robert Peel found an incomparable advocate in the late Mr. Charles Buller, as it has now a steady friend in a noble Earl who often sits on the Cross Benches (the Earl of Meath). To be reduced to the United Kingdom would be a loss of European prestige. By European prestige, I mean only the spirit which prevails against the matter which exceeds it; the force which guards, although it may be latent and invisible; the arm which overcomes, although it still continues in its scabbard. Above all, to lose our transmarine possessions, would discredit us at Berlin, where support is often necessary. It would discredit us, because the German Empire has become a colonizing Power; and it would not find a natural connection with a Power abandoning its Colonies. The sacrifice alluded to is also wholly inconsistent with the line of reasoning which Canon Dalton and Professor Seeley had remarkably exhibited, one in a luminous discourse, the other in a celebrated volume, which may be thus imperfectly resumed—that the wars of the last century and this one, down to 1815, were only justified in principle, redeemed from loss and balanced as to outlay by colonial acquisitions which have followed them at all the European settlements from Utrecht to Vienna. If, therefore, the present status cannot be relied upon for a year, or even for a month, some new method of colonial policy is evidently needed. It is only in this manner, and not from vague ideas or from declamatory phrases, that we are forced to examine the now often-repeated term, Imperial Federation. If the noble Marquess the First Minister gave a favourable welcome to the deputation in 1886, he has been more recently inclined to hold up its project rather to derision. There is much, however, to entitle it to scrutiny. The whole subject of federation has been handled by Professor Freeman in a treatise of which the second volume is still impending on society. It is allowed to mean autonomy of parts subordinated to a centre. It is seen in public schools, where houses governing themselves are all connected by a general authority. It is known in Universities, where colleges of various pursuits and various foundations are all subjected to a body which confers degrees and chooses representatives. To come to practical detail, it may be said to exist whenever a superior assembly is added to the several assemblies of the country thrown together. There are many types of union, and only one of federation. Its proper use appears to be where certain groups can neither be entirely divided nor entirely amalgamated. At this moment we may contemplate and study it in the United States, in Austro-Hungary, the German Empire, and Switzerland. There is no absolute impediment to its existence in regions intercepted by the ocean, if every coast and every port remains approachable by navies. It was by ships alone that Athens was enabled between the Peloponesian and the Persian Wars, to keep the sort of empire she had founded. But the defence of federation belongs more properly to the Chairman of the League established to support it. We have been told by one of our earliest instructors not to approach heroic themes, if some one else is bound and qualified to handle them. I go on therefore to admit that there are many grounds for hesitation with regard to it. It could not easily arise, except after great organic changes in Great Britain. It is not certain that the best Colonials would have leisure to transfer themselves to an Imperial Assembly. As they would be in a minority for a considerable time, it must not always be an easy or harmonious one. Above all, the central Power must make up its mind beforehand to preserve the system by force of arms when once it is arrived at. The Civil War of the United States still vividly impresses on us the fundamental lesson it embodied; that is, the melancholy consequence of leaving it ambiguous how far incorporated units retain the power to withdraw themselves. None of the essayists or reasoners on Imperial federation appear to have made up their minds on this part of the subject. It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider whether any other kind of policy is open, as it is shown that we cannot stand still or give up every link with the colonial system. Sir John Macdonald, the Canadian Minister, in a speech which was reported about a year ago, adverted to the importance of transforming Colonies into auxiliary powers. It appears also from his recent correspondence that Sir Henry Taylor, the great colonial administrator, as well as author of "Philip van Artevelde," leant to the same solution. It might, no doubt, be plausibly defended. Our Colonies, like the vassal principalities of the Ottoman Empire, may still be under the Suzerainty of Great Britain. Or the acknowledgment of a Supreme

Court might still continue to unite them. A guarantee against external dangers would induce them to place their fleets and armies at the disposal of this country. As we adhere to many unproductive guarantees, a productive guarantee can hardly be objected to. It is generally seen in history that fleets and armies gain a quick and wonderful development in countries which are thrown in some degree upon their own responsibilities. Canada, South Africa, Australia, would have a greater number of armed men if they approached to independence than if a federal connection had united and submerged them. Besides, arrangements of that kind involve no revolution or transition in Great Britain. So much could hardly be affirmed of what is called Imperial federation. On the other hand, there would be a risk of such auxiliary powers escaping us. They might then be launched into the world without the institutions they require for their stability. The balance of power possibly would suffer. It is no light thing to form approximative nations. Tempests may arise as to a descending suffrage, an elective presidency, or a national religion. There must be therefore hestitation in adopting the idea of Sir John Macdonald and Sir Henry Taylor. There must also be hesitation in rejecting it. We are thrown into an abyss of doubt, not only between two systems, but between the views by which either may be recommended or resisted. In a perplexity of this kind it is not improper to turn to standard authors on colonial policy. Important as they are, they would be hardly able to direct us. Neither Gibbon Wakefield, the great master of colonial questions, who used to be consulted as an oracle by Members of both Houses, nor Lord Grey, who wrote with the immense authority the Colonial Office had imparted to him, nor Mr. Roebuck, for a long while a Canadian representative or agent, nor Lord Brougham, whose treatise on Colonial Policy at the beginning of the century first made him known to society, and still rewards the student who goes back to it, is wholly equal to the function of directing us. But there is another class of leaders we might be more inclined to follow and rely upon with sanguine hope of being sufficiently enlightened. They are such travellers as Mr. Froude, Baron Hubner, whom I have mentioned, Mr. Finch-Hatton, and the noble Earl who has come back, and once directed the Colonial Office (the Earl of Carnarvon). Their merit is beyond, indeed, my power to describe it. Mr. Froude has been charged with inaccuracy. There is more, however, to be gained from his inaccuracy than from the erudition of many other persons. Baron Hubner has so wonderful a power of grasping causes and elucidating difficulties that you would think he had held high office in all the countries which he traverses. Mr. Finch-Hatton is instructive on everything in Australia, whether the processes of a gold mine, the habits of a buck jumper, or the manœuvres of a faction. In graphic power, if I am not deceived, the noble Earl surpasses all of them together. But he and they are equally unwilling to arrive at or promulgate statesmanlike conclusions on the course to be adopted, while none deny a further course to be essential. It, therefore, becomes appropriate to look at further methods open to the Government. It is only on comparison they can be expected to adopt, or even to consider, the one which I should be disposed to recommend to them. The first method would be another Conference at Westminster. But you could not a second time exclude Imperial Federation from it. Delegates would come instructed to oppose or to support the measure. It is not thus that sound conclusions can be hoped for, as the instructions could not possibly be based on long consideration or perfect grasp of such a topic. Besides this, it might be difficult a second time to draw first-rate colonials to this country. It has been proposed that they should meet elsewhere—at Ottawa, for instance; but such a plan is, on the face of it, imprudent and impracticable from the jealousies which must arise around it. Another course would be to draw reports from every Colonial Governor on the dispositions which exist to closer union with Great Britain, and the manner of attaining it. About 20 years ago a process of this kind was resorted to in India, to gather popular opinion on the administration which exists. It had, no doubt, some interest and value; but a collection of Reports from Governors would hardly satisfy the public that Imperial Federation was tenable or otherwise. An appeal would be demanded from their judgment. Sir Frederick Young, whose work I have alluded to, and who has been long known as a Colonial politician, maintains that one mission ought to go, under a well-chosen director, to all the regions where the system would be contemplated. There is much to recommend a course of that kind; but it appears to me that it would be too high and too laborious a function to confer on anyone, unless the Secretary for the Colonies himself resolved to undertake it. The Secretary of State may well derive from the late Sir Henry Holland, the curiosity and energy of travelling. Those who know him best would guarantee his going all round the world without ever saying or doing anything imprudent. In 1855 the Secretary for the Colonies at that time, Lord John Russell, went out on a mission to Vienna unconnected with his Office. It would, therefore, be within the bounds of precedent, at least, that the noble Lord should go out on a mission vitally affecting his Department. It is not probable, however, that he can be spared for so long a period from Ministerial and private obligations. In that event, a different method may suggest itself, and for rapidity in some degree a better one. A mission going successively to every point required would not complete its task for 3 years at the soonest. But long before that time the sort of chart and compass which we aim at may be necessary. On this ground alone, as well as others, simultaneous proceedings are desirable. If inquiring bodies were sent at once to Canada, South Africa, and Australia, it is quite possible that by a year from Easter their reports would be in our possession. There is no political contingency, of many which may strike us, in which it would not be desirable to have them. At first, and very properly, the Colonial Office may be led to feel some hesitation and aversion as to any course whatever. On one point they would go with me, however.—They would recognize the vast advantage of the official and responsible over the unofficial and irresponsible inquirer. It arises in this way. The former goes out with a staff to aid him, he remains as long as is found necessary, he draws into activity all the able minds of the dependency he visits, he labours under great responsibility, his report is accurate and searching, as he is not bound to have his eye, like ordinary travellers, upon the literary market. But in Canada, at least, there is remarkable experience to guide and to encourage us. The mission of Lord Durham in 1838 can never be forgotten. It would stand out vividly from the transactions of the day, if it ever fell into the hands of any qualified historian who had gained the power to foreshorten and develop. The essence to be borne in mind is that while the mission was attended with every species of disaster and impediment, so much that the Earl of Durham gave it up and did not long survive it, the report was so luminous and solid that it served for many years as the basis of Colonial policy, while it was the immediate stepping-stone to the tranquility of Canada. Lord Durham was exposed to the intense hostility of an excited opposition in this country. The greatest orator of that, perhaps of any time, the first Lord Brougham, rendered him the object of brilliant and implacable invective. Some of his proceedings, justly or unjustly, were disavowed by those who had appointed him. His authority in Canada was therefore seriously compromised. But still, with the distinguished aid of Gibbon Wakefield and Charles Buller, who accompanied him, he was able in a few months to present to the Queen and the two Houses a State paper, which might justly be considered as immortal, and which, at least, was far from unproductive. It would be absurd to imagine, however, now, when the union of Upper and Lower Canada, which it authorized, has passed away and merged in the Dominion, nothing more of the same kind is wanted to replace it. As to South Africa, the need of information more authoritative than any which exists, has been exhibited in nearly all the many controversies and embarrassments of which the country has been so fertile. It was seen in the exodus of the Boers, which led to the establishment of independent States on our frontiers. It was seen in the hurried measure of annexing the Transvaal, and still more in the precipitate conclusion to fly from battle fields which followed. It was seen in the acquisition of the Diamond Fields, as some have reasoned, by encroachment on a treaty. It was seen in the war directed against Cetywayo by Sir Bartle Frere. You have only to refer to authors such as Francis Galton, Anthony Trollope, Mr. Greswell, Mr. Mackenzie, for evidence of our perplexity. But it would need a lifetime to become master of South African affairs. I therefore hurry over them. At this moment there is the greatest possible diversity of judgment as to whether the offices of Governor at the Cape of Good Hope and High Commissioner of Africa ought to be united in one person. There is a far stronger case as to Australia, based on estimates and facts, which do not bear on other parts of the Colonial world, and ought not to escape us. It is the most remote (if you include New Zealand) and, therefore, according to the beautiful and often cited passage of Mr. Burke, the most precarious of our dependencies. It is the most extensive in its area. It is the largest in exports, imports, and revenue. A variety of questions well known to Parliament, connected with New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, New Guinea, have in some degree impaired, although they have not shaken, its allegiance. Such men as Dr. Lang have done their utmost—it may not be very much—to excite the love of national existence. The poetry of the country—for poetry has occurred in Gordon, and in Kendal — breathes a kindred aspiration. It cannot be denied that there is a dominant idea of connecting with Australia all the islands which surround it, as New Zealand was connected by our action. It cannot be denied either that the British tie is not regarded as an aid to the eventual consummation. In 1850 the want of information on Australia was deeply felt in Parliament when the question of forming Upper Chambers was debated, although the critical return of Mr. Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke) did something to abate it. In 1856, when another and more vital Act of Parliament was carried, a greater knowledge of Australia would have been most important to the Legislature. It is hardly necessary to refer in detail to the transaction of New Guinea, which could not have pursued its dangerous course had proper light existed. Last of all, in November and December, the appointment to Queensland, however unobjectionable in itself, and which I have referred to, became no doubt a blow to the connection of Australia with Great Britain. To what except imperfect knowledge at the Colonial Office could it be attributed? We have also to remember that Australia, beginning as a convict settlement, has need of all the elevating influences which you can bring to bear upon it. The discovery of gold, whatever animation, or wealth, or numbers it created, was not a balance, but an aggravation, morally and socially, of the original misfortune. What sort of Governors have been appointed? Even at best they have been local, and without a general control over the mighty area which stood in need of organizing force, and of regenerating influence. So far, Australia has not even the good fortune of New Zealand. New Zealand has been formed by the rare virtue, indomitable energy, heroic type of Bishop Selwyn, the mature experience of Sir George Grey, the masterly acumen of Gibbon Wakefield, who may be considered as its founder. Australia has never had a mind or character impressed on its mysterious extent and hidden capability, which would suggest the parallel of Washington in the United States, or of many others in Great Britain. Beyond Captain Cook, they have no founder to look back to. It is desirable that such a want should be redressed, even if Imperial Federation is a vision, even if no assistance can be drawn from this extraordinary settlement. Allusion has been made to circumstances tending to relax the bonds between Australia and Great Britain. Another ought not to escape us. It is the hatred which exists of Chinese immigration. It is, of course, seen that the Mother Country cannot, without some inconvenience at Pekin, effectually discourage it. A ground of alienation both economical and social may at any time present itself. But there is a larger view upon this subject I cannot go into this evening. Even if mistaken scruples of economy deter the Government from immediate action as regards Canada and South Africa, the title of Australia to the best support by which her future can be organized would stand alone, and special, and imperative upon them. The Motion offered, it should be remarked, however, does not bind the Government to any course whatever. They may reject the method I prefer, adopt the methods which appear to me inadequate, or hit on means of action which entirely escape me. The Motion only gives the possibility of acting. It gives the possibility of acting, because, without some indication from Parliament or from the public, the Government can do nothing at present. The deputation, brought about the Conference at Westminster. There would have been no Conference if there had been no deputation, and no further course will be pursued unless some agency impels it. There is not any other agency. It has been said that Governments are only gauges of pressure brought to bear upon them. The noble Marquess the First Minister is himself the author, and he is bound, perhaps, to be from time to time the illustration, of the maxim. There are some fallacies which stand in the way of any Resolution which hardly need a serious reply, and yet cannot be wholly disregarded. It is said that time alone will bring about the necessary union. Unfortunately, time is by itself an agent in the opposite direction. Dependencies of large extent, it has been shown, are always on the road to nationality. Time also may produce the war so dangerous to cohesion. Time ought to be embraced by us, but not relied on for this purpose. It is said that commercial union will tend to the political arrangements wished for. Unfortunately, the commercial union is quite beyond our reach, and if we wait for that we shall have to wait for ever. It is said that federation will spring up by gradual process, like the British Constitution. The British Constitution may have been in some degree evolved, but its main features have been brought about by perilous exertions, such as Magna Charta or the Revolution of 1688, of which the anniversary is near us. The true principle is rather: there is a price for everything—results of an extraordinary kind are only to be purchased by remarkable exertion. Objection, therefore, can only come from those who question altogether the necessity of strengthening the Empire. Can they deny the weakness of the Empire? Has it not been seen in various transactions? But that inquiry is superfluous. It is admitted by the language of the Government. It is the foundation and the shelter of the Naval project they are offering. It is true that Naval project, as regards security, and as regards defence, may remedy to some extent the weakness which provokes it. But we are not to forget the volume which the noble Marquess elicited some years ago on purpose to exhibit the range of our guarantees, the insufficiency of power to maintain them. In that volume, which may be considered as a text book of European policy, equally adapted to the novice and the expert, we observe our duties to Portugal, to Belgium, to the Ottoman Empire. It leads us to a well-founded incredulity — it was meant to do it—as to how far the United Kingdom, standing by itself, is qualified to execute and meet them. We cannot do it wholly by a Navy, unless indeed considerable bodies of marines are placed on board the further ironclads you organize. It remains only to point out the error of those who, while acceding to the train of reasoning submitted, suggest that this House is not entitled to come forward or point to any sort of action on the subject. The Government, it has been shown, are chained until some agency releases and impels them. It cannot be the other House, which very probably is buried in the Estimates from February to Easter. This House alone is equal to the function. It has not ceased to be the Council of the Realm, as it was before Simon de Montford added representatives in 1265, and before those representatives were separately organized. The House of Lords is deemed by some to be less stable than it used to be. An Upper Chamber and a suffrage more than democratic may be some day irreconcilable. But while the decay of men is quick there is a lingering vitality in institutions and assemblies. A Senate which resolves upon a step to pave the way for union with its dependencies may draw from climes and races the most various an echo to reward, perhaps an echo to immortalize it. But if the House is doomed to pass into abeyance, its last decrees and waning efforts might be well subordinated to the maxim, *Tu regere* *imperio populos Romanem memento*, and thus directed to transform an overburdened State into a preponderating Nation. On these grounds, and many others I have not been able to advert to, I move the Resolution as it stands upon the paper.

Moved to resolve, That in the opinion of this House the Colonial Conference of 1887 has led to good results, and ought to be the basis of further measures tending to Imperial security.—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

*Lord KNUTSFORD: My Lords, we have heard with interest the speech which the noble Lord has delivered upon a subject in which he has taken great interest, and a subject of which I am the last person to deny the importance. This Empire, though so vast in extent, comprising as it does some 9,000,000 square miles and 321,000,000 of inhabitants, has probably the least systematic organization of any Empire of the present day, or of any of the great Empires which have flourished and passed away. This Empire has been built up by conquest, cession, annexation, and settlement; and the result of those different modes of acquisition has been that within its limits there is a variety of races, of religions, languages, customs, laws, and constitutions, probably unequalled in any Empire, ancient or modern. So far, then, I agree with the noble Lord that there may remain much to be done in re-organizing the Empire. To bring together the component parts of the Empire into closer union; to unite more closely the Colonies between themselves by some system of Colonial Federation; and to strengthen the links between the Mother Country and the Colonies by some system of what is called Imperial Federation, is, I admit, not only the dream, but the legitimate aim and object, of Imperial statesmen. But the subject is one of great difficulty and delicacy, and no one can approach, or ought to approach it, without due and careful regard, and full inquiry and examination into the wishes, the views, and the interests of our fellow-subjects in the great Colonies. One is reminded of the reply that the Empress, Catherine II., gave to the philosopher Diderot, who had favoured her with a cut and dried system of reform, and was finding fault with her for not pressing it on the country. Her reply was—

> "Yes, Mr. Philosopher; but you seem to forget the very different positions that we hold with respect to reform. You work on paper, which endures all things, and presents no obstacle to your imagination or your plan; but I have to work on the human skin, which is ticklish and irritable to an alarming degree."

That reply is very much in point, I venture to think, with respect to this question. I may agree in the outlines of the picture which the noble Lord has drawn, but I confess I feel great difficulty in filling up the details. One consideration appears to me to lie at the very root of the matter, and to bear strongly upon many parts of his speech. It is this—that looking to the rapid increase and the extraordinary development and great responsibility of self-governing Colonies such as Canada, Australasia, and the Cape, I take it to be clear that any proposals which tend to alter the relations between the Mother Country and the colonies must come, if they are to be of any service at all, from the Colonies themselves in the first instance. Our fellow-subjects in the Colonies view with, perhaps not unnatural jealousy, any proposals which come from this country. They are apt to think—I hope that their belief is unfounded—that we consider too much our own interests, and are not sufficiently alive to their interests and position. Personally, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe it to be in the interest, not only of the Mother Country but of the Colonies, that they should remain integral parts of the Empire—and, not only so, but that they should be as far as possible more closely united by ties of commerce, increased facilities of communication, and uniformity of laws, and ultimately—if it can be found possible—by their bearing some more direct share, and having a more direct voice, in the Councils of the Empire, and, as a result of that, their bearing a larger share in the defence of the Empire and Imperial responsibilities. But though any Government—Her Majesty's Government or any succeeding Government—would be ready and anxious to consider carefully any well-thought-out scheme which lies in that direction, I believe that any Government would have to be satisfied that the scheme—as I have before said—must come, in the first instance, from the Colonies themselves. The consummation may be devoutly to be wished, but it is a long way off, and those who desire to see closer union must, I think, be contented to wait until the inhabitants of our great Colonies are themselves satisfied that their best interests will be secured by a closer union. These and like questions must be fought out in the Colonies. The noble Lord has admitted—and no one who has read the debates in the Assemblies of the Australasian Colonies can doubt it—that there is a party—I will not stop to inquire how large it is, or whether it is increasing; but there is a party of men who most conscientiously believe that the Colonies are now sufficiently independent to stand by themselves; that they would be better freed from the responsibilities of the Empire; and in fact that it would be better, as they express it, to cut the painter. Well, that is the view of a party in Australasia, and it appears to me, as I think it must to your Lordships, that that is a question which must be decided in the Colonies, and that until it is decided it would be useless, nay, even mischievous, for us to formulate in this country schemes for a closer union. I believe, also, that some system of Colonial Federation must precede any such closer union with this country. If one could look forward and see the great Australasian Colonies federated as the Dominion of Canada is federated; see also the West India Islands federated, and perhaps our Eastern Colonies, it would be within the bounds of possibility that those great federations might be properly represented in this country; but I think it would be absolutely impossible to have any system of representation of the separate Colonies as they now are. For these reasons I confess it appears to me that it would be unnecessary for me to go in detail into the different suggestions that have been made by the noble Lord. Of course, I must not be understood as finding fault with the noble Lord for bringing forward this motion. It is very desirable that independent persons who take keen interest in Colonial subjects should ventilate their opinions for the consideration of people here and in the Colonies, but it would be impossible for me to pledge Her Majesty's Government to any of the noble Lord's suggestions; and in the circumstances it would be premature for me to express any opinion on the part of the Government. The noble Lord spoke of the success of the Conference of 1887. I concur in the hope expressed by the noble Lord that this Conference may be succeeded by other Conferences, because I consider they tend to draw closer and closer those bonds which have been created by a common origin, a common history, and a common allegiance. I hope, further, that any future Conferences will partake more truly of an Imperial character, and will include representatives from the leading Crown Colonies, because, as your Lordships are aware, only the responsible governing Colonies were represented in 1887. But, as the noble Lord has himself pointed out, the decision as to holding future Conferences does not rest with us—it rests with the Colonies themselves. To what was the success of that Conference owing? It was owing mainly to the character of the delegates sent over by the different Colonies. They sent over Premiers, ex-Premiers; men who were then taking their share in the administration of the Colonies, and men who had taken a leading part in the administration of the Colonies; men who had won their spurs in Colonial political battles, and who were men of distinction and experience. They came over at personal inconvenience to themselves, and secured the success of the Conference by lending us their loyal aid, which was based upon their knowledge and experience. But it would be a question for the Colonies to consider when, and under what conditions, they can again spare their leading statesmen to come over here. The noble Lord, in one part of his speech, seemed to think it a very easy thing for a Minister to be spared, and he suggested my going round the world picking up information, and neglecting the Crown Colonies and the duties of my office; but it is not so easy to spare statesmen from the Colonies to come over to this country, and I have never yet heard any proposal that a Conference should be held in one of the Colonies. There is a sufficient amount of jealousy between the Colonies to make it doubtful whether a Conference would be successful if held in any Colony. I think, also, it is not desirable to deal with any question of a Conference until the results of the present Conference have been more fully worked out. There is the question of defence. It must be admitted that the Colonies are deeply interested in the question of defence; but perhaps I may be allowed upon this subject to read to the House the words of the noble Marquess, spoken at the opening of that Conferenc.

> "On this question of defence the Colonies have a very real and genuine interest in the shield which their Imperial connection throws over them, and they have a ground for joining with us in making the defence of the Empire effective, a ground which does not rest upon their allegiance to this country, but which is based on the most solemn and reasonable foundations of self-interest and security."

The ships which are to be added to the Australian Squadron are now in course of construction, and all the Colonies, with the exception of Queensland, have passed, with unanimous acclaim, the legislation necessary to secure their co-operation. In Queensland, it is true that, owing to a change of Government, and to the General Election, no Bill has been submitted to the Queensland Parliament. It is also true that Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the present Premier, has pronounced himself against the arrangement; but I have very little doubt that, when the matter is again seriously considered, and long before the time for payment arrives, Queensland will waive any difficulty upon the point, and will see the desirability of not separating herself from the other Australasian Colonies, and also losing the advantage of the increase of the Squadron. I will not go into further details as to the measures for defence. Several measures, such as those for the defence of Esquimalt, Thursday Island, and of St. George's Sound, are under consideration, and I should hope for a speedy decision upon them. Then I may mention one of what may be called the unheroic means of securing closer union, and that is the uniformity of laws. As the noble Lord has stated, several legal subjects of considerable importance were brought forward, and discussed at the Conference, and though they have not yet been finally worked out, they have been carefully considered. I will only refer to three subjects of considerable importance, and to which the delegates attached great weight. One is the enforcement in this country of the judgments of Colonial Courts, and, of course, enforcing also in the Colonies the judgments of the Courts of this country. The second is the enforcing orders of Colonial Courts in Bankruptcy, and in winding-up of companies and winding-up estates. And the third was the providing machinery for the speedy recognition in England of probates and letters of administration granted out in the Colonies. Bills have been framed by the Government draftsman on all these points. They have now been sent out to the Colonies, and when we get replies from the Colonies I should hope that we should be enabled to legislate. There are some other legal subjects with which I think I need not now trouble your Lordships; but, before these legal matters be disposed of, and before we have ascertained by practical experience how they work, I think that, considering there is no burning question that could now be brought before a Conference, it would not only be unnecessary, but would, in truth, be inconvenient to attempt to summon any other Conference for some time. I may very shortly refer to two of the suggestions that the noble Lord has made in default of a Conference. The first suggestion, as I understand it, is that we should call for Reports on the question of Imperial Federation. That appears to me, for reasons I have already given, very undesirable. I think the Colonies would view with great jealousy any attempt on our part to bring forward that question, and to obtain Reports in the manner suggested. The second was—if I may call it—a scrambling general inquiry in which I was to take somewhat a leading part, with some minor officials. Really the same objection applies to that proposal. The person who would be sent out as a Commissioner would have no powers to call anybody before him or to get books before him to examine. He must trust entirely to the information that is given him, and it would be given him reluctantly if he were in an official position. It could be far more readily obtained by gentlemen travelling inofficially in the Colonies, but with their eyes and ears open. I believe such a semi-official inquiry would not be viewed with favour. In all the circumstances I would ask the noble Lord, as the subject has been ventilated and discussed, and as he is now made aware of the views of Her Majesty's Government, that he would consent to withdraw this Motion. He assumed that it is a Motion that means nothing; but if it means nothing, we should hardly be justified in agreeing to it, and it is hardly worth while for him to press it. But it does mean something as I understand it; it is a Resolution which binds Her Majesty's Government to take some steps in the direction that he has indicated, or to take some abstract and undefined measures which he has not indicated, but which are to "tend to Imperial security." Therefore it must mean that the Government should take some steps at an early stage by Conference, inquiry, or otherwise, and I am bound to state frankly that Her Majesty's Goverment cannot consent to be bound by such an engagement.

*LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL: I know the House to be impatient of reply, and I only rise because no one else seems now disposed to do so. Indeed, the noble Lord the Secretary of State has offered nothing which I ought to counteract, nor given reasons for the Motion being avoided. It is true that he has criticized the modes of action I rejected as inadequate, but luckily—and this ought to be noted—he has not said a word against the simultaneous missions I recommended to his judgment. There may not be between him and me the slightest difference of opinion. However, he requests me to withdraw the Motion. I cannot do so, because, if I am permitted to repeat a former phrase, it is the only way to cause a possibility of action, and because no species of objection has been offered to it. If the Government decline to accept the Resolution, they may amend it or move the Previous Question without resistance upon my part. I cannot withdraw the Resolution, and to negative it would be a Vote of Censure on the Conference of 1887, and those by whom it was originated.

On question, resolved in the negative.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to order); An amendment made; The Report thereof to be received on Monday next.

ARBITRATION BILL.—(No. 5.)

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS BILL.—(No. 6.)

Read 2ª (according to order).

AFFAIRS AT LAKE NYASSA.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN, in rising to ask if further information can now be given as to the present condition of affairs at Lake Nyassa, especially with reference to the reported arrest (and subsequent release on bail) of Mr. Ross, British Vice Consul, said: My Lords, I do not think it will be at all unreasonable that a question such as I have placed on the Paper should be asked at the present time, although I am aware that so recently as the early part of last week a question bearing upon the matter was put in another place and answered by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; but at that time the matter to which I allude in this question had not been reported to this House, at any rate it was not alluded to on that occasion. There is no doubt a very large amount of interest has been attracted in this country towards affairs in the Nyassa Territory, and I think this interest has been extended and increased owing to the fact that an association known as the African Lakes Company has been carrying on operations recently in that region. That Company had its origin in Scotland, and is chiefly equipped by Scotchmen. It carries on operations designed to stimulate and encourage the development of the country both in the matter of trade and missionary enterprize, and these two objects are carried on harmoniously and in perfect consistency. For example, one of the rules of the Association is that no intoxicating drinks should be sold in their district, and though, of course, every such effort requires caution, I have heard no complaints as to the Company having shown a want of discretion in the zeal that they have displayed in their work. On the contrary, I am led to suppose that at present, if they are involved in any complications, that is not in consequence of any aggressiveness on their part, but rather in consequence of the jealousy, and I venture to say the unreasonable jealousy and suspicion of others. My question is rather incomplete, because I do not state what the district is in which Mr. Ross is Vice

Consul. It is in the Fillamare territory, which is Portuguese territory, and I understand that he is supported by our Consul at Mozambique. This gentleman is also agent for the African Lakes Company to which I have referred. I can quite understand that the noble Marquess who will answer the question may deem it necessary to exercise considerable reticence on the subject, especially in view of the actual proceedings which have been taken by the Portuguese, but I sincerely hope that it will be possible for him to give some information which may allay uneasiness, more especially with regard to the position of the African Lakes Company.

*The Marquess of SALISBURY: In answer to the noble Lord, I have to say that we have no information at the Foreign Office with reference to the incident alluded to in this question. I do not know whether it has actually taken place or not. But the place which he mentions is not in connection with the telegraph, and we have little information with respect to the African Lakes Company which would at all satisfy the very natural interest which the noble Lord feels in the subject. The enterprize is one which we all regard with the greatest sympathy, and the progress of which will be advantageous not only to the progress of this country, but to the civilization of those who dwell in those regions. I hope that enterprize will go on and be successful. It has at present met with no actual obstacle except that very serious obstacle offered by the hostility of the Arabs—who fear that their slave-trading operations may be interrupted by the success and prosperity of the company; and undoubtedly they have met with very serious resistance, and some of their agents have been exposed to considerable danger. But so far as I know there has been no loss of British life in the struggle. Still, very great danger has been incurred, and it is obvious that we can do little or nothing to shield them against the enterprize of these various tribes of natives, especially the Arabs, whose opportunities of hindering them are very considerable. With respect to the position of the Portuguese, all I have to say is that the discussions relating to our *status* in that district, and the *status* of the Portuguese are going on at the present moment, and it is, therefore, not convenient that I should enter upon a discussion of that matter. None of the obstacles which have interfered with the development and prosperity of the African Lake Company have been interposed through the agency, as far as I know, of the Portuguese. We have, therefore, on that ground no international complaint against them. The whole question is one of great difficulty, and is being watched with great anxiety and vigilance by Her Majesty's Government. I can assure the noble Lord that we shall spare no effort that we can properly make for the purpose of furthering the salutary enterprize and designs of British, and especially Scottish traders in that district. But the region is not British territory, and it is not under British protection, and at present any action we might take must be limited and controlled by the circumstances to which I have referred. If there is any other matter on which I can give the noble Lord any information, I shall be glad to do so. But I do not know that I can now usefully pursue the subject any further.

The Earl of DUNDONALD: There is one point on which I should like information, and that is as to the action of the Portuguese with regard to the munitions of war—whether they permit munitions of war to go up to our countrymen? I believe that they did allow three guns to go up there—an Armstrong, a Nordenfelt, and a mountain gun, and a certain amount of ammunition. If they did so, it would have a very good effect. Of course, it would be impossible for our countrymen on the Lake to resist an Arab attack unless they had an unlimited supply of ammunition. Therefore, I should be very glad if the noble Marquess could give any information to the House as to whether the Portuguese are more liberal in allowing arms and ammunition to go up for the use of our countrymen.

*The Marquess of SALISBURY: The policy of the Portuguese Government, resembling that of other Governments on the coast of Africa, is to forbid the importation of arms and ammunition for fear of their reaching the tribes in the interior, so as to give additional opportunities for conflict and bloodshed.

I do not know that we can take any exception to that general policy. Undoubtedly we have had occasion to urge upon them to relax that prohibition for the purpose of permitting warlike stores which were required by the agents of the African Lake Company in defending themselves against the Arab attacks; and it is also true that we have not met with that willingness to aid us in a question dictated by obvious motives of humanity that we should have expected. A considerable quantity, however, both of arms and ammunition have been passed by the Portuguese, and it is not within my knowledge now that agents of the African Lake Company are suffering any inconvenience in consequence of obstacles which are imposed to the importation of arms by the fiscal regulations of the Portuguese Government.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, till To-morrow a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 25*th March*, 1889.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

*SIR W. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to move—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Bill to inquire whether or not any modifications of the constitution or mode of election of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board may be necessary or expedient, and to make provision for the same accordingly; and that all Petitions against the Bill presented within the time limited by the Standing Orders relating to the constitution or mode of election of the Board be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitions."

The object of this Instruction is simply to enable the Committee sitting on this Bill upstairs to make inquiry with regard to two points in the constitution and mode of election of the Board; and although the subject is not technically contained within the clauses of the Bill, it is so closely connected with it that I venture to ask the House to allow this Instruction to be passed in order that these two points may be dealt with by the Committee. The Motion, I may say at the outset, does not proceed from any hostile or outside body. Those whom I represent are, practically, the proprietors of the Trust. The Trust itself was constituted in 1857. Before that the Harbour Board was elected upon an entirely different principle, but it was felt that the management of the Docks should be in the hands of a Board elected by those who use the port and pay the harbour dues. That principle was strongly affirmed at the time the trust was constituted, and especially on a report presented by the Board of Trade. That report says:—

> "The principle adopted is that with which the country is familiar—namely, that taxation and representation should go together; those who pay directly towards the expenses of the Trust, *i.e.*, the Dock and Harbour ratepayers, are, it is proposed by the Bill, to elect the Trustees. My Lords believe that this is the true principle, and that no other will be found to be at once just and practicable. That local bodies having interests often directly at variance with those of trade ought not to have the control is clear from the history of Liverpool itself; and management by the Central Government is not to be thought of. A question might be raised to what extent representation should go, as all persons producing or consuming goods exported or imported have more or less direct interest in the harbour and docks through which they pass. But the principle representation will probably be thought to be carried as far as practicable when it is extended as in the present Bill to all merchants, manufacturers, or dealers, who pay rates on goods or on ships to a certain given amount, more especially as they can vote by proxy."

The persons I represent are the traders who form the electorate of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board, and they have been affirmed by Parliament to be the proper persons to manage this important Trust. Their Petition sets out that those who take an interest in this matter consist of 30 Corporations, Local Boards, Chambers of Commerce, and trading societies in the North of England; and it is also signed by 300 firms or individuals not connected specially with Lancashire, but spread over the whole of the United Kingdom including Cork and other places in Ireland. It cannot, therefore, be said that we are intruding upon a measure which has no connection with us. We approach it in no hostile spirit; but, being our own Bill, we think we have a right to lay before the Committee the views we entertain in regard to the constitution of the Dock Board. Nor do we entertain the slightest hostility to Liverpaol and Liverpool interests as represented by the Dock Board. There are naturally a large number of the electorate who reside in or about Liverpool, and we do not propose to destroy their rights. All we say is that they possess too exclusive powers at present. It has been asserted that this is a device on the part of the Manchester Ship Canal Company to throttle the Docks. That assertion is entirely without foundation. I do not represent the Ship Company in any way. This is an old question, which was discussed long before the projection of the Ship Canal. In fact, I represent a large number of persons who must always use Liverpool both for the import of their raw material and the export of their goods, and all they wish to do is to place before the Select Committee the two points I have mentioned. At present electors who live at a distance from Liverpool will not take the trouble to place themselves on the register of electors, because they know that it would be necessary to go to Liverpool on a particular day in order to exercise the right of voting. All we ask is that in future they shall enjoy the same privilege that every railway shareholder in the Kingdom has—namely, the right of voting by proxy. The Board of Trade, in the Report to which I have referred, placed great emphasis on that condition, so that the traders might have an opportunity of dealing with their property in the way they thought best. It may have been natural in 1857 to require a candidate for a seat on the Board to reside within 10 miles of Liverpool, but, as a matter of fact, 50 miles form no greater distance now than 10 miles did in 1857; and there can be no difficulty in getting a man who resides 50 miles from Liverpool to perform his duties as a member of the Dock Trust. At present there are 2,481 electors on the register, the qualification being the payment of £10 in the course of the year in dues. That by no means represents by many thousands the number who ought to be on the register, but of those 2,481 electors 2,239 are connected with Liverpool, leaving only 242 for the area outside Liverpool. Out of 24 elected Members, there is not a single representative of any interest outside Liverpool. So far as a precedent is concerned, a similar Instruction to the one which I now move was passed in the case of the Aire and Calder Canal. It is said that the bondholders ought to be consulted, and that they ought to appear before the Committee before any alteration in the constitution takes place; but I do not see how the interests of the bondholders can possibly be affected by this Instruction. The principles on which the Trust is managed have already been settled by Parliament; and all we ask by the Instruction is that the Committee shall consider whether greater facilities shall be given to the electorate in order that they may record their votes, and greater liberty be given to them in the choice of representatives. A suggestion has been made that the Instruction should be amended by introducing the words—"If the Committee think fit." We should have no objection to the introduction of those words, and we are quite willing to allow the Committee to decide whether they will enter into these questions or not. Another suggestion is that the words "and to make provision for the same accordingly" be omitted. I cannot consent to that for this reason—that if the Committee think it is right to make a change, that change should be carried out at once. The Instruction deals with a grievance which for 30 years has existed between the Dock Board and the traders, not only of Lancashire, but of the rest of the Kingdom, and we are desirous of seeing the grievance removed. I beg to move the Instruction which stands in my name on the Paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill to inquire whether or not any modifications of the constitution or mode of election of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board may be necessary or expedient, and to make provision for the same accordingly; and that all Petitions against the Bill presented within the time limited by the Standing Orders relating to the constitution or mode of election of the Board be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitioners."—(*Sir W. Houldsworth.*)

*MR. W. P. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): The Instruction which has been moved by the hon. Baronet opposite proposes to deal with a Bill of very small administrative character, which is intended to improve the working of the Trust of the Mersey Estuary and the Mersey Docks, which has been devolved by Parliament upon the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. Originally the harbour accommodation was in the hands of the Liverpool Town Council, and it was they who in old days developed the trade of the port, and by the facilities granted alike to ships and to the goods they carried, created the enormous trade now centered in that port. In 1857 a Bill was introduced into this House, which was ultimately passed into law, and which transferred the management of the Harbour and Docks to a separate body — created as the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The present Bill is introduced by that body, and it is entirely of an administrative character. It proposes no Constitutional changes, and it asks for no fresh borrowing powers. It consists of 36 clauses, half of which deal with the deviation of a short railway already authorized, which deviation has become necessary in consequence of the increase of the trade of the port, and which it is desirable to promptly effect in order to enable a certain dock to be deepened, and to provide increased facilities for carrying on the trade of the port. The other provisions are purely of an administrative and technical character, dealing with questions affecting the tender of pilotage services, anchorage, and navigation; nevertheless, the hon. Member for North-West Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) seeks to found upon a simple Bill of that kind an Instruction of a very far-reaching character. I think it would be very much against the constituted precedents of the House to pass any Resolution or Instruction of the kind proposed. The House has provided a method by which a change or reform of the sort desired can be introduced. It can be done in either of two ways—either by moving for a Committee of Inquiry, on whose investigations a Bill might be founded, or by those who feel aggrieved introducing a Bill setting forth the reforms asked for. Neither of these methods has been adopted by those who agree with the hon. Baronet; but a third method has been proposed, which ought to meet all the necessities of the case. The Docks and Harbour Board do not seek to stifle any inquiry at all; they rather court it. It has been said, and said rightly, that this is a national matter; and if the conduct of the Board is to be inquired into, they are prepared to maintain that the Trust has been managed in the interest not of Liverpool alone, but of the traders using the port. For example, take one of the matters mentioned in the Petition. When the Board was constituted the town dues were bought from the Corporation of Liverpool, the amount paid for them being £1,500,000. Those dues produced a very large sum then — they produce now nearly a quarter of a million annually, and are increasing. But these dues are applied, not for the benefit of the City of Liverpool itself, but absolutely and entirely for the benefit of the Dock Trust, and therefore the town dues are now purely dock dues, only levied under another name. It may be said, and apparently very fairly said, "Why, then, keep these town dues—why not abolish them and increase the dock dues?" The answer to that is very simple, though not very acceptable, I am afraid, to those who support the Instruction, for it discloses the imaginary nature of their supposed grievances. It is this—that the dock dues are liable to be rated for poor rates and municipal rates, but the town dues are not, and if the town dues are abolished, the result would be that the dock dues would be increased by a quarter of a million, and further increased by a sum of £24,000 or £25,000, which would be required to be additionally levied as dock rates, to pay over as poor rates and municipal rates. The interests of those who live outside the port have always been fairly considered, and very many of the cases suggested as being instances whereby the interests of those outside have been injured are really cases where the interests of all have been considered, and where the Trust has been conducted with due consideration for national interests, and not with reference to local interests at all. With regard to the question of the bondholders, all I would say is, that if either of the methods ordinarily used in Parliamentary procedure had been adopted they would have had notice that a Bill had been introduced or that a Parliamentary Inquiry had been granted. Now legislation is sought for at a comparatively late period. Under ordinary circumstances, notice would have to be given in the month of November, but here we are in the month of March, and fair and reasonable notice cannot be said to have been given to all those interested by an Instruction of a far reaching kind being sought to be foisted upon a small Bill like this. I hope the House will not accede to the Instruction unless the hon. Baronet is prepared to amend it by inserting the words he said he was willing to insert, and to omit the words, "And to make provision for the same accordingly." I beg to move the omission of those words.

Amendment proposed, in line 4, to leave out the words "and to make provision for the same accordingly."—(*Mr. W. Sinclair.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.): I wish to say a word in support of the Motion. It seems to me that the Instruction proposed would require the Committee only to attend to a very limited matter. They are seeking, mainly, an improvement in the representation of the Mersey Harbour Board; they do not want to change the electoral body or to extend the suffrage, but simply to ask that the electors should have the power of voting by proxy. These electors are now scattered all over the United Kingdom, and unless they have the power of voting by proxy they are really a disfranchised body. That is the main change required. There is one other change asked for—namely, that instead of men who are eligible as candidates having to reside within 10 miles of Liverpool, that distance shall be extended, and they shall be able to elect candidates residing within 50 miles of Liverpool. These are the two propositions which we wish the Committee to consider and deal with, and with regard to them the Committee could take their own course. The Port of Liverpool, as everyone knows, is maintained mainly by manufacturing and commercial interests. At a considerable distance from Liverpool, where interests have no voice in the Harbour Board, it is sought to give them that voice. We wish to throw a little light on to a somewhat close body, and to have better management. We believe that the management we propose would be to the advantage and also to the commercial interests not only of the district, but of Liverpool itself.

Mr. RATHBONE (Carnarvonshire): I was one of the Members of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce when they came to Parliament to construct this Trust, and, therefore, I wish to say a few words as to the reasons which guided Parliament in framing the Trust. Originally the Corporation of Liverpool was an exclusive Conservative body, and they had shown a greater foresight than the Corporation of any other town in the country in maintaining the Port of Liverpool as a National Trust, without any beneficial interest whatever. But, although they showed this foresight, the time came when those who used the Docks thought that the Trust should be placed on a wider basis, and that those who owned them should have the management of them. Parliament accordingly, in 1857, established the existing Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The Board received no payment for direction, and the Docks and Harbour have been managed hitherto without any suspicion of corrupt motives. When it was proposed to introduce the system of voting by proxy I saw some of my friends in Manchester, and pointed out the very great danger there would be in inducing people who were living all over the country to watch the management of the Docks and take an interest in them. There is a fear that such individuals might be got at by persons with private interests of their own to serve, and might be persuaded to use proxies against those who are in the actual management of the Trust. One strong reason why the Government and the House of Commons should be cautious in this matter now is that there has been a large undertaking set on foot for private profit, called the Manchester Ship Canal, and my hon. Friend opposite largely represents those who are interested in that Canal. Now, if the Canal is to be of benefit to the country, it must be kept entirely distinct from the Railways and the Harbour Trust, because the three bodies ought to be in competition, or the public will get no advantage from the new undertaking. If those who are in favour of this Instruction can show any way by which this National Trust can be made more national and more beneficial to the country at large nobody will be more glad to see it than the people of Liverpool, whose prosperity is so extensively bound up with it. Their desire is that the Dock rates should be kept as low as possible. Nobody is interested in having them high. If it is considered necessary to make a change, it ought only to be done by a carefully drawn Bill regularly laid before the House, instead of being dealt with by a side wind in this manner.

*MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): Although there are numerous Members representing Liverpool and Manchester and the adjacent towns, not to speak of others like the hon. Member who has just sat down, and the hon. Member for the Falkirk Burghs (Mr. Sinclair), who are more or less connected with Liverpool, I trust I may be allowed to intervene early in the debate, as I would wish the question at issue to be settled without raising too keenly those local jealousies that seem to lurk about it. It has been truly said that this Bill is in itself a comparatively moderate measure, but the Instruction which has been moved is one which raises a very important principle. Moderate as the Bill is, there are in it some alterations—not, I admit, of a very important character—but still alterations which do affect the mode of electing the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. Therefore the Instruction, as far as it relates to the mode of election, is not out of order. The Instruction, however, goes further, and it expresses a desire that the conditions of the qualification upon which persons may be elected shall also be inquired into. That is a somewhat large question, which is not directly raised by the Bill itself. The Instruction, therefore, is an expansion of the provisions of the Bill, and an expansion such as I think the House ought to be slow to entertain. I believe that many Members will regard with jealousy any proposals to raise in Committee with Bills, simple and restricted in their scope, large questions not involved in them as submitted to Parliament. I gave expression to that jealousy last year in reference to the Aire and Calder Bill, but on that occasion the House showed itself so bent on having its own way in the Instruction then moved that it was carried without a division. It did not result in anything, because the Bill was afterwards dropped, but still the House insisted on carrying it. In this case the opponents of the Instruction are willing that there should be inquiry, but they are of opinion that the Committee should not be entrusted with the power of making a provision to carry into effect any change which they may deem necessary. That, I think, would be a lame and impotent conclusion. It amounts to this—that we are to entrust a Committee with the power of inquiry, but not to entrust them with any further power which may result in a particular course of action; and I therefore feel that those who are opposed to any alteration are practically adopting an inconsistent position when they say that inquiry may be made, but that it shall not be followed by revision. The issues raised are of a most important character, and I agree with the hon. Member for Carnarvonshire (Mr. Rathbone) that the Trust may be exposed to risk if any undefined alteration is made in the constitution of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, who are charged with important functions in connection with interests which make the Mersey Board a National Trust. It must not be forgotten that we may be exposing to risk the interests of persons who have lent the Board between £14,000,000 and £16,000,000, seeing that the credit of the Trust rests entirely upon the good management of the Board. I would therefore suggest as the best way out of the difficulty, while at the same time safeguarding the interests of the bondholders, that the Bill should be referred to a Hybrid Committee, and that, in addition to four Members appointed by the House, there should be three Members added by the Committee of Selection. You would then have a Committee of weight and authority. If that suggestion is adopted it will be necessary as a matter of form to withdraw the Instruction altogether, and to move that the Bill be referred to a Hybrid Committee.

*MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): When the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board come here for additional powers, surely it is not unreasonable that the Committee to whom their Bill is referred should look all round the question, and have power to make such Amendments in the Bill as circumstances require; that, as I understand it, is what the Motion of the hon. Baronet comes to. There is a population of some millions of people residing within 40 or 50 miles of the Port of Liverpool, and the Mersey is the chief inlet for the food of that population, as well as the chief outlet for the products of their industry. They have certainly a right to some share in the management of the port. Take one trade alone—the cotton trade. The imports and exports of that trade amount to something like £100,000,000 sterling a-year, the greater part of which goes through the Mersey. What do those who are intimately connected with that trade want? First, sufficient accommodation for the traffic they send; and, secondly, that the management of it should be economical, so as to ensure reasonable charges. They think that those two objects would be best secured by giving those who pay the dues a larger share in the administration. It is objected that persons elected from a wider radius than 10 miles from the centre of Liverpool would rarely attend the meeting; but that objection answers itself, for, if so, the people of Liverpool, in the absence of Members from a distance, will have matters all their own way. It must not be forgotten that Manchester is only 40 or 45 minutes from Liverpool, and so, practically, as near the docks as persons living in the suburbs of Liverpool. For these reasons I heartily support the Instruction moved by the hon. Baronet.

*MR. NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange): I represent those who would be most affected by this Instruction, but I do not ask the House to come to any decision upon the merits of the question on this occasion. It is not a question as to whether the constitution of the Dock Board is the best that could be obtained, or whether any alteration might improve it. But it is a matter of such great importance, affecting such varied interests, that I think it would be wrong for the House to take a course which would enable those who are opposing the Bill of the Dock Board in an indirect and irregular way to effect a reconstruction of the Board. The persons who are advocating this proposal to-day are the persons who are most interested in the Manchester Ship Canal, and the owners of a rival port. You are, therefore, asked to put into the hands of a rival port the administration of the Liverpool Docks. ["Oh!"] It is all very well to say "Oh, !oh" but I would ask hon. Members to wait and see. If you give the right to vote by proxy to all traders who pay £10 a-year in goods or tonnage, and the right of selecting their candidates within a radius of 50 miles of Liverpool, you will virtually take away from Liverpool the management of her own Docks, and make alterations so extreme as to be utterly indefensible. Liverpool, which is so much affected by the action of the Dock Board, does not wish to exclude investigation into the way in which the Docks are managed. At the same time, I do say this—that if so important a change is to be made it ought to be made in a regular way. Why, in a Bill of this kind, should issues be raised which are totally outside the subjects with which it at present deals? I should like to point out that the only alterations which are to be made by the Bill in the method of voting are the increase by one hour of the time during which votes may be given and the prolongation of the notice which is to be issued. I would ask the House to bear in mind that these alterations were inserted in the Bill at the request of Manchester men themselves. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board were asked to make these changes in the method of voting, and now they have done so their concession is used as a peg on which to hang the Instruction which has been moved in the House to-night. This is a matter of immense importance to Liverpool, and I contend that hon. Members ought not to use the omnipotence of this House for the purpose of denying to the people of that city what I submit are their ordinary rights.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I do not suppose that the House will think of hearing all the Members who are interested in this question on one side or the other, but I wish to point out that the immediate question before the House is the Amendment last submitted, which would have the effect, if carried, of debarring the Select Committee from giving any effect to the decision they come to upon the Instruction. The result would therefore be to nullify the reference. Hon. Members have said that great interests are at stake in this matter. Well, I do not think the House has so little confidence in its Committees as to doubt that any proposal of this kind will be considered with all the care which it deserves. I do not see why it should be thought that the Select Committee will not be thoroughly competent to do justice to both sides of the question, and nothing is more common than, when a Corporation asks for additional powers, the occasion should be seized to propose changes in its constitution which experience has prompted. No doubt the hon. Member in charge of the Bill will have no objection to the proposal of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, that the Select Committee should be strengthened by the addition of Members to be chosen by the Committee of Selection. I do not think anyone who desires the Select Committee to come to a fair conclusion can oppose that suggestion. It has been said that the object of this proposal is to give rival ports the right to interfere with the Port of Liverpool. I should like to point out that there are a great many more large centres of industry concerned than merely the City of Manchester. Liverpool is surrounded by a network of railways connecting many towns which are concerned in the management of its port. I hope the House will reject the Amendment.

*Sir W. HOULDSWORTH: If I understand the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees to be merely that this Bill be referred to a Hybrid Committee, I have no hesitation in saying that I will accept it.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The question before the House is the proposal standing in the name of the hon. Member for Falkirk (Mr. W. P. Sinclair). Does the hon. Member accept the suggestion of the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees?

Mr. W. P. SINCLAIR: I propose, Sir, to move the Adjournment of the Debate, in order that those whose interests I represent may have an opportunity of considering it.

*The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Forwood, Lancashire, Ormskirk): I hope that the hon. Member will not press his Amendment, but will accept the suggestion of the Chairman of Committees. There is no doubt this is a very large and important question, which goes far beyond the mere management and control of one harbour. There are bondholders to the extent of £16,000,000, who have no voice whatever in the action of the Board. The bonds are renewable on short terms of from three to five years, and it is, therefore, undesirable for the House to do anything which will in the least disturb the minds of the holders. I think that such a strong Committee as was indicated by the Chairman is the best body to which to refer this question.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member for Falkirk accept the suggestion?

Mr. W. P. SINCLAIR: Before accepting it I will ask whether those who introduced the Instruction will not be at least fair enough to allow those of whom I am the only representative in this House to consider it? On behalf of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board I would request that the debate be adjourned.

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Bristol, W.): I do not think the hon. Member and his Friends would be in any way injured if he withdrew his Amendment; because, as has been pointed out, the Instruction of the hon. Member for Manchester will in any case have to be withdrawn for the present; and if there are any objections to the course which is suggested they can be urged when the reference to a Hybrid Committee is formally moved.

Mr. W. P. SINCLAIR: After that explanation I will consent to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*Sir W. HOULDSWORTH: I beg leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

*Mr. COURTNEY: I beg to give notice that I will move to refer this Bill to a Hybrid Committee.

QUESTIONS.

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THE SLUICE GATES AT KILLALOE.

MR. COX (Clare, E.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention had been drawn to the proceedings at a meeting of the Board of Conservators of the Lower Shannon, held in Limerick, on 7th February, at which a resolution was passed calling attention to the great injury constantly done to the fishery of the Shannon by the injudicious and reckless raising and lowering of the sluice gates at Killaloe; and what action, if any, the Board of Works had taken in the matter?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): From all the inquiries the Board of Works have made they have no reason to believe that any injury has been done to the fishery by the raising and lowering of the sluices at Killaloe; but, in accordance with the resolution passed at the meeting of the Conservators of 7th February referred to in the question, Mr. Reeves, the Chairman of the meeting, waited on this Board, who arranged with him that one of their officers, in conjunction with anyone appointed by him at any time he wished, would make experiments in raising and lowering the sluices, to ascertain whether there was any foundation whatever for the allegations.

MR. COX: I must ask the hon. Gentleman another question. The Board of Conservators must be aware that great damage was done by the raising and lowering of the sluices. I would ask whether they did not in that resolution state that thousands of fry were left high and dry?

MR. JACKSON: I have given the hon. Member the information which has been supplied to me. I am told it is absolutely impossible that the damage can have been done in the way described. Arrangements have, however, been made to test the matter, so as to satisfy all persons concerned.

EEL FISHERIES AT CASTLE CONNELL.

MR. COX asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Irish Board of Works let in the year 1884, for a term of five years, the eel fisheries at Castle Connell; and, whether, on the expiration of this term, the fisheries were relet; if so, were they put up to public competition; to whom were they relet; for what term of yeras; and at what rent per annum?

MR. JACKSON: The eel fisheries at Castle Connell were let in May 1884, after public advertisement, for the usual term of five years, which has now expired, and the Board have again advertised in Irish, English, and Scotch newspapers for tenders for the season commencing 1st July next. The tenders are not due until 1st June next.

THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT AT MERTHYR.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Secretary for the Home Department whether he had reason to believe that Colonel Lindsay, the Chief Constable for Glamorganshire, was unable to discover among the police of the county any man qualified to discharge the duties of Superintendent of Police at Merthyr efficiently; whether, in the event of any dereliction of duty on the part of Superintendent Lindsay, there was any independent authority to whom appeal might be made, outside the Chief Constable, his father; and whether, he was now in a position to state the results of his inquiry as to the public feeling at Merthyr and Aberdare at the appointment of Captain Lindsay, a young man with no previous experience in English police duty, over the heads of those who had spent a lifetime in the force, and who might naturally have looked for promotion had not the hitherto invariable practice been in this case departed from?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have no doubt that there were other men in the Force qualified to fill the office of Superintendent. Any complaint against a Superintendent would be addressed in the first instance to the Chief Constable; but if there is any reason to suppose that proper cognizance is not taken of the complaint, an appeal lies from the Chief Constable to the Court of Quarter Sessions; I have made no inquiry as to the state of public feeling in the locality; and do not conceive it to be a part of my duty to do so.

Mr. T. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not promise my hon. Friend the Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) that he would make such an inquiry.

Mr. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; I made no such promise.

WESTMINSTER HALL.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether Mr. Pearson, R.A., was responsible for the designs of the two new staircases and the south-west stone parapet which had lately been erected in Westminster Hall; whether these designs were considered and approved by the Select Committee on Westminster Hall; and, if so, why plans and elevations adequately representing them did not appear in the appendix to the Committee's report; whether the view of Westminster Hall, No. 22, in the appendix to the report, was the view referred to by Mr. Pearson in his answer, No. 158, to the chairman, or to what other view he referred, and why the principal staircase on the west side of the hall had not been made symmetrical with Sir Charles Barry's entrance to St. Stephen's Cloisters; whether the design for the stone parapet which had been placed at the south-west corner of the hall was approved by the Committee, and for what reason it had been substituted for the iron railing which formerly stood there, and which was in harmony with the iron railing leading to the members' south-east entrance to St. Stephen's Cloisters; and whether he was now able to fix a time when the public would be re-admitted to Westminster Hall?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): I am informed by Mr. Pearson that the designs of the staircases and of the south-west stone parapet in Westminster Hall are his; that the arrangement of the staircases was submitted to and approved by the Committee on Westminster Hall, and that they are adequately represented on plans 5A, 6A, and 8; that the plan No. 22 was referred to him, and that his (Mr. Pearson's) answer No. 158 pointed out that communication existed originally from the hall by means of staircases, and that a similar method was now proposed; that the arrangement of the plan did not admit of the entrances being placed symmetrically with that on the other side, even if it had been desirable that they should be so placed, and that they are, besides, of a totally different character, and on different levels; that a stone wall was necessary to carry the steps and landing giving access to the new rooms at that end, and that this stone wall could only be properly finished by a stone parapet as shown on plans 5A and 6A. The existence of an iron railing similar to that leading to the Members' south-east entrance to St. Stephen's Cloisters would obviously be inconsistent with the steps, landing, and parapet referred to. As to the last paragraph of the question, I am in communication with the Secretary for the Home Department on the subject.

SUNDAY DRINKING.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Secretary for the Home Department whether he could state why the Return No. 391, of September, 1888, entitled "Drunkenness on Sunday (Convictions)," for the first time included drunkenness associated with more serious and flagrant crimes, whereas previous Returns of this nature were confined to cases of a simple nature; and whether the discrepancy in the Returns from some of the Welsh counties was to be attributed to a misapprehension on the part of those whose duty it was to supply the information of the questions submitted to them?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart Wortley, Sheffield, Hallam): It is not correct to say that the Return No. 391 of 1888 includes for the first time cases of drunkenness associated with more serious crimes, whereas previous Returns of this kind were confined to cases of a simple nature. The Return of 1888 included all cases of simple drunkenness, unaccompanied by disorderly conduct. Many of such cases were not included by the majority of the local authorities who made returns in obedience to the orders of the House in former years. The Returns granted annually in many Sessions prior to that of 1888 are, I regret to say, valueless. A reference to that of 1884 shows that it purports to give information as to the number of convictions of persons arrested for drunkenness on Sunday. The request for information addressed to the local authorities was, unfortunately, ambiguous, since it left it doubtful whether cases of simple drunkenness (for which nobody can be arrested) ought to be included, as well as cases in which the delinquents could be and had been arrested. Some local authorities reported (in accordance with the exact terms of the Order of the House) those cases only in which persons were arrested and then proceeded against to conviction, while some included all cases of convictions for drunkenness. In granting the Return for 1888 it was thought well to state clearly the Acts under which Returns were asked for, and by the wording of the address to make it clear that all convictions were to be included, not only in cases where the law allows arrest, but also in those where it does not; also to make the Return include the years 1885, 1886, and 1887. In the case of Wales the total of convictions for Sunday drunkenness for 1885 and 1886 are considerably larger in the return of 1888 than in the Returns made for those years. This is due to the later Return being framed on a wider basis, and invariably including all Returns of convictions for simple drunkenness.

MONTE CARLO.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire) asked the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been drawn to a statement which had appeared in a Genoa newspaper, stating that about 50,000 visitors had resorted to the gambling tables at Monte Carlo during Carnival, among whom there had taken place 15 duels and 16 suicides; and whether the English Government could see its way to communicate with Foreign Powers with a view to the suppression of these tables?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I have not seen the statement in question, and if I had I could not judge of its accuracy. It is quite beyond the functions and duties of Her Majesty's Government to interfere in respect of such matters in foreign countries.

CARRYING A GUN WITHOUT A LICENCE.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to the case of a man named Joseph Clarke, who was lately sent to prison, with 14 days' hard labour, by the Bench of Magistrates at Newark Divisional Petty Sessions, for carrying a gun without a licence; whether Clarke's offence consisted in firing a gun loaded only with powder for the purpose of scaring birds off his employer's crops; and whether Clarke was subsequently released after three days' imprisonment, and by whose authority and for what reasons was his sentence remitted?

*MR. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Justices that this man was convicted of the offence named and was sentenced to pay a fine, and in default of payment to 14 days' imprisonment without hard labour. I am informed by the Justices that the man pleaded guilty, but before passing sentence the Chairman inquired whether there was any excuse for him on the ground of his having used the gun for scaring birds, and was answered in the negative. On the facts being reported to the Board of Inland Revenue, they ascertained that the gun was loaded and used in the manner stated in the question, and that the employer was under the erroneous impression that he could authorize Clarke to use the gun in this manner without taking out a licence. The Board thereupon made an order for Clarke's release forthwith, after he had been in prison for three days.

THE STATE OF GWALIOR.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary for India whether he was aware that, during the period Sir Lepel Griffin was agent to the Governor General for the Central Indian States, the civil establishment in the State of Gwalior was greatly augmented and the salaries of certain officers increased, in one case from Rs.100 per month to Rs.1,200, in another from Rs.400 to Rs.2,000, and in a third from Rs.500 to Rs.1,500, and whether these instances were samples of a great number of like character;

whether, prior to the appointment of Lepel Griffin as agent in Central India, and before his interference in the affairs of Gwalior, the annual revenue of that state was 1 crore and 10 lakhs, and the expenditure 99 lakhs, showing an annual surplus of 11 lakhs; whether, at the present time, although the revenue had been increased by 11 lakhs, being the interest on 3½ crores of the late Ruler's savings invested after his death in Indian Government stock, there was an annual deficit of 7 lakhs, the revenue being 1 crore and 21 lakhs, and the expenditure 1 crore and 28 lakhs; and whether the Secretary of State would make inquiries as to the circumstances under which this state of things had occurred, and would lay upon the Table the result of such inquiries?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The official information in the possession of the Secretary of State does not contradict the facts suggested in the question; but the Secretary of State does not perceive in them any evidence of maladministration, and he sees no reason to suggest to the Government of India any interference with the present Council of Regency in the Gwalior State.

INDIAN TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

MR. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if he will recommend the Government of India to make permanent promotions in the Telegraph Department as vacancies occur, and not only on 1st April and 1st October?

*SIR J. GORST: The dates for making promotions in the Telegraph Department are fixed by the Government of India, and the Secretary of State is not disposed to interfere in the matter.

MR. D. SULLIVAN asked how many officers of the Telegraph Department had more than 30 years' service; and if, in the interests of the public service, whether as regards the efficiency of the department or economy in the matter of pensions, the hon. Gentleman would consider the advisability of retiring those officers, many of whom had already been superseded by officers many years their juniors, on special pensions, rather than allow men in the prime of life, and who were specially trained for the Department under the re-organization scheme of 1886, to leave the Service in disgust?

*SIR J. GORST: In answer to the hon. Member's first inquiry I have to state that the number of such officers is ten. In answer to the second inquiry I have to state that the Secretary of State sees no necessity for altering the rules as to the retirement of officers in the Telegraph Department.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Secretary for the Home Department what visits had been made to James Mullett during his detention in Millbank Prison; whether he would give the names of those visitors and the dates of the visits; and whether he would state on whose application each visit was permitted and by what authority permitted?

MR. MATTHEWS: Mullett has been twice visited while in Millbank Prison—on the 3rd of January by his wife, an ordinary visit on her own application, and on the 4th of February by Mr. Thomson, on behalf of Mr. Soames, and on his application. Both visits were allowed by permission of the Prison Commissioners.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask whether, as Mr. Thomson is not a solicitor, the latter interview was held, in accordance with the prison rules, in the presence of an official; and whether a record was kept of what passed at such interview.

MR. MATTHEWS: I have no information on the subject. If the hon. Member wishes for an answer to his question, I must ask him to give me notice.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether Sergeant Mullin, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, stationed at Ballyhaunis, county Mayo, had endeavoured to obtain evidence in favour of the *Times*, from one Patrick Lavan, late of Ballyhaunis, but now living in Washington Territory, United States, and wrote in the following terms:—

> "I guarantee your name will never be mentioned, and I further guarantee that it will be the means of putting you on your feet;"

and whether Sergeant Mullin's action in this matter was an independent private inquiry or was instigated by some one in authority over him?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am informed that Lavan, before leaving Ireland, had shown the sergeant a letter which Lavan represented as being important. The sergeant did write to Lavan, with whom he had had previous relations, for this document. The inquiry was, I am informed, made by the sergeant with the sanction of his superior officer.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask whether a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary force is entitled in a case between the *Times* and the Irish Members to offer Lavan money to give certain evidence?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There is no case between the *Times* and the Irish Members.

MR. J. F. O'BRIEN: My question was whether Sergeant Mullin had endeavoured to procure evidence for the *Times*. The right hon. Gentleman has said "Yes."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir.

TENANTS ON THE OLPHERTS ESTATE.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he was aware that all the tenants on the property of Mr. Wybrants Olpherts in Glahercoon and Curransport, in the parish of Gweedore, had been served with ejectment processes, to be heard at Quarter Sessions, which would be held at Falcarragh on March 26; whether it was a fact that, owing to the failure of the potato crop, these tenants had no potato seed of any kind to crop the lands; and whether the Government would take any, and, if so, what steps to provide work for the people who were in want of food and money, and were threatened with eviction?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that it is not the case that all the tenants on the townlands of the estate named have been served with ejectment processes to be heard at Quarter Sessions at Falcarragh, nor, as a matter of fact, are Quarter Sessions held there. But it is the case that some of these tenants have been summoned to Petty Sessions to give up possession of their holdings. It also appears that, in some instances, the tenants on these townlands are without potato seed. It is not considered that any case can possibly arise which cannot be dealt with under the provisions of the ordinary Poor Law.

THE SUGAR BOUNTIES.

SIR H. ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) asked the Under Secretary for the Colonies on what principle he included glucose in a Convention in regard to sugar bounties; and whether he was aware that glucose was not a sugar extracted either from beet or cane, but was a manufactured product derived from potato, starch, or other like bodies, by the action of sulphuric acid, and was now largely used by farmers, brewers, and other industries?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (BARON H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): In answer to the hon. Member, I have to say that glucose is a product which now enters into competition with cane and beet sugar in certain industries. It was, accordingly, included in the Convention of August 30, 1888, on the suggestion of the technical advisers of the Powers represented at the recent conferences, on the ground that commodities which are used as substitutes for sugar should be included in the prohibition to obtain bounties.

WAR OFFICE CONTRACTS.

CAPTAIN SELWYN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many firms were last year invited to tender for the supply of large guns, and whether Messrs. Vickers, Messrs. Brown, and Messrs. Cammell were among the number; whether these firms were gunmakers; whether it is a fact that the only information the firms invited to tender could get was contained in a set of drawings of different sized guns; whether it is a fact that there was no specification, except that the steel was to be subjected to certain tests; whether, on application to the War Office, the firms were told that there "was no further specification," and that they must make their tenders upon the drawings only; whether it is a fact that no instructions as to the amount of shrinkage, hardening, or tempering were given; whether there was any stipulation as to the test the guns had to go through after completion; whether the whole order for guns, with the exception of a small number of small calibre, was given to

Messrs. Vickers; and, whether Messrs. Vickers had ever made guns; and, if so, how many?

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield): Before my right hon. Friend answers this question, I should like to ask him if the War Office has not been thoroughly satisfied that Messrs. Vickers have every possible appliance for the manufacture of finished guns, and if the high reputation of their steel forgings and those of Messrs. Cammell and Brown does not justify the full confidence of Her Majesty's Government in their endeavours to stimulate Home Industry?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In answer to the hon. and gallant Gentleman (Captain Selwyn) who has put the first question, I have to say that I am informed that all the firms which had expressed a wish to entertain the question of the manufacture of guns were invited to tender. Messrs. Brown and Messrs. Cammell were not among the number. It is understood that these firms and Messrs. Vickers had made forgings for guns, but not guns themselves. The information upon which tenders were invited was not complete, but it was sufficient for the firms which had been invited, all of whom tendered. The principal share of the order fell to Messrs. Vickers, the remainder, including some heavy guns, went to Sir W. Armstrong and Co., and of course neither Messrs. Vickers nor any other firm which had not previously made heavy guns would have gone to the expense of setting up plant without a substantial order. In reply to my hon. and gallant Friend behind me (Mr. Howard Vincent), I may state that most ample inquiries were made before intrusting Messrs. Vickers with this order, as to their means of production; and the Director of Army Contracts was satisfied that they could place themselves in a position to execute the orders within reasonable time. There is no reason to be dissatisfied with the progress already made.

THE IRISH PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION AND THE NAVAL SURVEYS.

MR. MULHOLLAND (Derry, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is his intention to carry into effect the recommendation embodied in paragraphs 7 and 25 of the second Report of the Royal Commission on Irish Public Works, that the Commissioners of the Admiralty should appoint one of the surveying ships of Her Majesty's Navy to make soundings and observations with special reference to the fishing grounds, and that some person practically acquainted with the requirements of deep-sea fishing should be placed on board the vessel so assigned in order to advise and assist the surveying officers, and to collect information which might be useful to the fishing industry?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The recommendations of the Royal Commission are in very general terms. The Admiralty would be glad to consider on its merits any specific proposal made to them on this subject; but they cannot at the present time undertake to divert a surveying ship from the far more important work of correcting the charts used for general purposes of navigation for any less important object.

THE INDIAN AND AUSTRALIAN MAILS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I have to ask the Postmaster General why mails from Australia by the long sea route are taken to the Plymouth Post Office to be sorted instead of being dealt with in the travelling post office, Plymouth viâ Bristol; whether this is an exceptional delay, which does not occur in the case of letters which arrive by sea from America, Cape of Good Hope, West Indies, and New Zealand; whether he will cause inquiry to be made why 5,000 letters from India and Australia for Scotland and Ireland were not forwarded by the down Irish day mail of the 18th instant; by what despatch were they ultimately forwarded; and how many hours' delay were these letters subjected to?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The mails from Australia, brought to Plymouth by the long sea route at reduced postage rates, average only about 3,000 letters, and they are easily disposed of at the Plymouth Post Office—a plan which does not generally involve delay. To forward them by special train, as is done sometimes with the large and important mails from the Cape, the

West Indies, and New Zealand, would cost about £46 per mail, an expense far greater than would be warranted by the importance of the correspondence, which the senders have designedly forwarded for economy's sake by the long sea route in preference to the dearer but quicker route of Brindisi. As regards the second question, I may explain that it was through a combination of untoward circumstances that some 5,000 letters for the country districts of Scotland and Ireland lost the first despatch on the 18th of March, and were delayed from four to twelve hours. These letters formed part of about 35,000 letters for the provinces, which reached London a short time before the despatch of the down Irish day mail, and had to be dealt with at the same time as two American mails. Nevertheless, 30,000 of the Indian and Australian letters were despatched by the outgoing mails, including all those for England, and nearly all for Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin. The Scotch and Irish provincial letters generally take longer to sort than the rest of the correspondence, owing to the intricacy of the sorting. I have again to apologize to the House for occupying its time with trivial details of this description.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to give notice that, in consequence of this answer, I will move, on going into Committee of Supply, that the salary of my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General be reduced by £2,499 19s. 11¾d.—that is to ¼d.; and I will call attention to the answer to show that the statement just made is not in accordance with facts.

CARDIFF ASSIZES—CASE OF JAS. TAYLOR.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the sentence of five years' penal servitude passed by Mr. Justice Grantham upon James Taylor at the Cardiff Assize, as reported in the *South Wales Echo* of Friday, 14th March, for an indecent assault; whether in the morning papers of the following day the sentence is stated to be 18 months' penal servitude; which of the two periods the convicted man is undergoing; and, whether he can account for the discrepancy?

Mr. MATTHEWS: My attention has been called to this case. The original sentence of penal servitude was passed by inadvertence, and was corrected the same day by the learned Judge, who imposed a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can give the dates respectively upon which District Inspector Seddall left his duties in Ireland, on subpœna from the *Times*, to attend the Royal Commission Court, and returned thereto; and whether, as he was not examined and was not in daily attendance at Court, he can say if he was engaged in preparing evidence for the *Times*; and, if so, whether he can give the names of the police officers or other witnesses with whom he was so engaged?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that District Inspector Seddall continued in London throughout November. He was not engaged in preparing any evidence for the *Times*, but merely waiting in obedience to the subpœna to be called before the Court.

IRELAND—THE CASE OF MR. STACK.

Sir H. DAVEY (Stockton): I desire to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland to state what was the legal offence of which Mr. Stack was convicted at Tralee on 12th February last; what was the conduct for which he was convicted; and whether there was any evidence affecting Mr. Stack personally, other than the deposition of Mr. Cecil Roche, R.M.?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, Dublin University): Mr. Stack was ordered by Captain Welsh, Resident Magistrate, to find sureties for his good behaviour, as stated by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, in his answer to a former question. He was so ordered because, in the opinion of the Magistrate, the conduct of which he was guilty was calculated to lead to a serious breach of the peace. He was not convicted of any offence, but was sentenced in the ordinary way to imprisonment in default of bail. The case was dealt with by the

Magistrate in this summary way on the strong application of Mr. Stack and his solicitor, who stated that Mr. Stack was of delicate health and offered any bail that might be required. I am informed that the required bail was given. The offence was committed in the presence of Captain Welsh, who, as the hon. and learned Member is aware, was, under such circumstances, fully competent to exercise the jurisdiction to which I have referred without the further evidence of the deposition referred to in the question.

Sir H. DAVEY: May I ask whether the House is to understand that all that Mr. Stack did was to take off his hat?

Mr. MADDEN: The House is not to understand anything of the kind. The actual offence for which Mr. Stack was ordered to find sureties for good behaviour was that of heading an excited mob in the town in circumstances which, in the opinion of the Magistrate, were calculated to lead to a breach of the peace.

Sir H. DAVEY: Was there any evidence before the Resident Magistrate affecting Mr. Stack personally other than the deposition of Mr. Roche himself?

Mr. MADDEN: The Magistrate witnessed the action of Mr. Stack in the town, and under the circumstances was fully entitled, upon what he himself had seen, to bind him over in sureties to keep the peace.

THE BOARD OF CUSTOMS AND THEIR LIVERPOOL OFFICERS.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, since the dispute between the Board of Customs and their officials at Liverpool has now been settled, the censure on the officers and the interdict on their association for the redress of grievances has been cancelled; and, if so, whether any intimation to that effect has been conveyed to the officers interested?

Mr. JACKSON: As I have already stated more than once, the question at issue between the Board of Customs and their officers at Liverpool has been settled fairly and satisfactorily by the Board without reference to the Treasury, and I have no desire or intention to intervene in the matter.

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

Mr. ISAACS (Walworth) asked the hon. Member for Dundee, as Deputy Chairman of the London County Council, whether, having regard to the unhealthy area lying between the Law Courts on the east and Drury Lane on the west, generally known as Clare Market, and to the opportunity that would be afforded, if such area were cleared, of obtaining suitable sites for the erection of artizans' dwellings, and, at the same time, of widening the Strand between the churches of St. Clement Danes and St. Mary-le-Strand, the County Council for London will take into their immediate consideration the desirability of introducing the necessary measure for effecting these two objects?

Mr. HALSEY (Herts, Watford): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to a point of order. This is the first time, I believe, a question has been addressed in this House to any hon. Member representing the new body, the London County Council, and I think it is not improper that the question should be raised before you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in order to put a question of that sort. Referring to that book which we all go to when in doubt as to the proceedings of the House, I find that questions may be put to particular Members who may have charge of a Bill, or who have given notice to amend, or who are otherwise concerned in some business of the House, but the question which is now put does not come in any way under that category. Now, I know that of late years questions have been put to the Chairman and Members of the Metropolitan Board of Works, who were concerned in the administration of the Metropolis, and I have no doubt that it is in consideration of the London County Council having succeeded the Metropolitan Board of Works that the question has been put. I wish to point out, Mr. Speaker, that it seems to me——

*Mr. SPEAKER: It is hardly necessary for the hon. Member to argue the point. When the London County Council was first instituted, I came to the conclusion that it would not be proper to continue the privilege of allowing questions to be put to members of that body who may be in this House, as was done in the case of representatives of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and for this, among other reasons: that it would be impossible to draw the line between the Deputy-Chairman or any other Member of the London County Council and the representatives of the County Councils who might have seats in this House.

MR. FIRTH (Dundee): Mr. Speaker, I simply rise to say that I believe the London County Council will be well satisfied with your ruling.

MR. ISAACS: I would respectfully point out, Sir, by way of explanation, that it was a great convenience to the five millions of inhabitants of London that questions affecting them should be asked and answered in the House by the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, to which body the London County Council had succeeded.

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention had been called to the following paragraph, concerning the enforcement of the Plan of Campaign on the Kenmare Estate, in the *Irish Times* of the 21st instant—

> "Recently the estate bailiffs, accompanied by police, visited some of the tenants' houses and farms. Having seized one man's cows, they called at his house, and found him in bed unwell. He professed himself, in the presence of the police, as being glad that they came, as he was quite ready and willing as ever to pay his rent, but was not allowed. He handed the men £7 in notes, as being all he had at the time, but owing to one of them being a £5 note the £7 amounted to £11. On being pressed for more, his rent being £30, he produced, as he said, a small bank deposit receipt for £20. On examination it turned out to be for £100. Another which he had was for £40, and finally the receipt for £20 was found, and handed to them without the slightest hesitation;"

and, whether the police were present on the occasion referred to; and, if so, have they made any Report on the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said: On the the 7th inst. Lord Kenmare's bailiff seized three head of cattle from Jeremiah Mahony for rent due, amounting to £31. Mahony expressed himself willing to pay as much as he could, and he handed the bailiff £11 in notes. The bailiff said that was not enough and he must seize the corn. Mahony then produced a deposit receipt which he said was for £20, but it turned out that it was for £100. He then produced another deposit receipt for £40, and finally one for £20, which the bailiff accepted. The police were present.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE CAITHNESS SHERIFF COURT — THE CASE OF WEIR *V.* WEIR.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate whether, in the case of Weir against Weir, in the Sheriff Court of Caithness, the Sheriff Substitute decided in favour of the defender in respect of facts brought out in the portion of the written evidence in the case which is amissing; whether Sheriff Depute Thoms, when the case was before him on appeal, reversed the decision of the Sheriff Substitute, decided in favour of the pursuer, and cut out and abstracted from the process the evidence, or portion of the evidence, on which the Sheriff Substitute relied in support of his decision in the case; whether, in Scotland, the Judge of an inferior Court, in a case subject to the review of a superior Court, has any right whatever to cut out and abstract from the process, or to cancel beyond recognition, any portion of the written evidence taken in the cause by the Judge of the first instance, and upon which the decision of the Judge of the first instance rested; whether he will cause Sheriff Thoms to restore to the process the evidence, or at least an authentic copy of the evidence, cut out and abstracted by him, and which he (Sheriff Thoms) states "was not destroyed but is amissing;" and whether he will institute an independent investigation with the view of ascertaining the true facts as to the number of pages of evidence so cut out and abstracted, as to whether the same were or were not torn up by Sheriff Thoms, and as to what he did with, or what became of, the pages of evidence so cut out and abstracted?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): There has not been time to obtain the requisite information. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will be good enough to put the question on the Paper on Thursday.

PROBATE DUTIES AND LOCAL TAXATION.

MR. O'KEEFFE asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer at what time the proportion of Probate Duties granted by Parliament in relief of local taxation will be applied in Ireland; and if it is possible to mention the probable sums that will be so annually distributed?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. J. G. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): With regard to the great bulk of the Probate Duty grant, which goes in equal moieties to the relief of county cess and of poor rate, I understand that the Lord Lieutenant's regulations provide that the Local Government Board shall submit to the Lord Lieutenant, as soon after the 31st of March as may be practicable, a statement showing the amount of the grant to which each Board of Guardians and road authority is entitled in respect of the financial year ending on that day; and, on receiving the Lord Lieutenant's approval of such grants, the Local Government Board shall cause payment thereof to be made by means of orders on the Paymaster General. With regard to the £5,000 payable to the Royal Dublin Society, I understand that the Lord Lieutenant has made regulations by which this sum shall be paid to that society as soon after the 1st of January in each year as his Excellency shall direct. It is impossible to state the exact amount of the Probate Duty grant to Ireland, as it depends on the yield of the Probate Duty in any given year. This year Ireland receives 9 per cent of one-third of the Probate Duty, and this grant is expected to amount to something between £120,000 and £130,000. In future years Ireland will receive 9 per cent of half of the Probate Duty. If the Probate Duty during the coming year yields at the same rate as during the present year, Ireland will receive about £190,000.

HER MAJESTY'S SHIP *SULTAN*.

SIR JOHN COLOMB (Tower Hamlets) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can give any information as to the prospects of raising H.M.S. *Sultan*; whether it is a fact that a very considerable amount of dead weight had to be carried in this ship as ballast; if so, what was the amount of such dead weight so carried; when and by whom was the *Sultan* designed?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The latest telegram from the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean speaks very discouragingly of any hopes of raising the *Sultan*. The Admiralty have requested a salvage company, who have special experience in work of this sort, to examine and report on the subject. The *Sultan* carries 460 tons of iron and cement ballast equivalent to about one foot of increased draught. She was designed by Mr. Reed, now Sir E. J. Reed, when Chief Constructor of the Navy in 1868. The ballast was added after Mr. Reed left the Admiralty, on the recommendation of the Constructive Department, in order to give the stability that was considered necessary.

SIR J. COLOMB: Does the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty know whether the *Vanguard* also carried a large amount of dead weight, and that at this moment there are other ships carrying dead weight?

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): I wish to ask whether the designer of the *Sultan* was consulted before the ballast was put into her?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The *Sultan* was designed by the hon. Gentleman (Sir E. J. Reed), and with another deck battery the ballast was rendered necessary.

LORD C. BERESFORD (Marylebone): I beg to ask the noble Lord whether, in the event of the Salvage Company being able to raise the vessel, he will submit the proposal to the House before accepting it? I should regard it as a waste of money.

LORD G. HAMILTON: Of course the expense will be a serious matter for consideration.

RECOVERY OF LAND IN IRELAND.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR: I wish to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland if he can state the cause of the delay in the Return to an Order of the House of the 25th February of the Civil Bills in Ejectment and Writs for Recovery of Land in Ireland?

MR. MADDEN: The Return is an exceedingly difficult one. There are some 200,000 documents to examine, and that investigation will take a month or more to complete.

THE REPRESENTATION OF ROCHESTER.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN asked Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has yet received an application for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds from the Member for Rochester (Colonel Hughes-Hallett; and, if so, has it been granted?

*MR. GOSCHEN: No application has been received.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what is the rule with regard to a Member vacating his seat by being absent without leave; and whether any communication has passed between Colonel Hughes-Hallett and the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury?

*MR. GOSCHEN: I am unable to answer the question. The general rule with regard to the acceptance of the Chiltern Hundreds is laid down in "May's Parliamentary Practice."

THE COAL MINES REGULATION ACT.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention had been called to a report in the *Labour Tribune* touching the death of the 20 colliers at Pendwell Colliery, in North Wales; whether it is true that William Parry, fireman, stated in his evidence "that, on the morning of the explosion, when he visited the spot where it took place, he heard gas blowing or singing at the top end of the back brow;" and whether any mention of this fact appears in the Report Book, as provided for in Rule 4, Section 1, of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887?"

MR. MATTHEWS: I have seen a report of the inquest. William Parry gave evidence as quoted; but he also stated that he tried for gas with his lamp and found none, and for that reason did not report the presence of gas in the Report Book. The inspector has personally examined the back brow in question, and informs me that he heard the singing noise, but that there was no gas present, and the noise was due principally to water. The back brow had been standing for the last three years, and in the opinion of the inspector it is impossible that gas of any importance would be given off after such a lapse of time.

MR. FENWICK: Is the Home Secretary aware that Parry, in his evidence in answer to the Coroner, said that he had made no report as to finding gas?

MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot answer as to the exact words, but the substance of the evidence was that he had made no report, because, having searched for gas, he found none.

MR. FENWICK: Is the Home Secretary aware that no report of the examination was made in the book in accordance with Rule 50 of the Mines Regulation Act, 1887?

MR. MATTHEWS: I read the whole section to be that a report is to be made if gas is found. Parry, rightly or wrongly, although he heard a noise, came to the conclusion that there was no gas. He searched, but found no gas, and, therefore, we need no report.

MR. FENWICK: Will the right hon. Gentleman say that a report ought not to be made in every case, either as to the presence of gas or the condition of the roof?

MR. MATTHEWS: If the hon. Member will look at Rule 4 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, he will find the words there.

MR. FENWICK: I beg to give notice that I will put a further question on this subject.

BURIALS IN WALES.

MR. FENWICK: I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a report in the *Labour Tribune* of March 23, that the Vicar of Llanarvon refused to inter the body of Thomas Williams, one of the victims of the late explosion in North Wales, on Sunday, March 17, "upon the grounds that it was immoral to bury the dead upon the Lord's Day;" and if this report was true, what steps the Government intended to take to put a stop to such proceedings in the future?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I have seen the statement in question. The vicar informs me that it has no foundation whatever in truth. He has buried people on Sundays, and is ready to do so again.

SURCHARGES ON TELEGRAMS.

Mr. WILLIAM M'ARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid, St. Austell) asked the Postmaster General whether he will inquire into the circumstances attending various surcharges made upon Mr. William Lukes, of Saint Austell upon telegrams sent by him to the United States and Canada; whether he is aware that Mr. Lukes's telegrams were accepted on the 1st and 3rd of September 1888 at the rate of 6d. a word without demur; that later on in the day, the 3rd September, Mr. Lukes was informed that the rates had been raised, and that he must pay the further charge of £1 2s. 6d. upon his three telegrams; whether he is also aware that when Mr. Lukes paid this in the case of one telegram, but refused to pay on the other two, the Post Office authorities refused to return the money for the two telegrams for which Mr. Lukes declined to pay the extra amount levied, and issued an execution against him for the total amount of the extra charge for the three telegrams; and why the Post Office authorities, having been duly paid under their execution for the full amount of the three messages, refused to return Mr. Lukes the extra amount which he had already paid upon the first message.

Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that Mr. Lukes handed in at the St. Austell Office three telegrams, two addressed to Quebec and the other to Ohio. The charge for telegrams to Quebec had been raised by the companies concerned to 1s. per word, and the charge for telegrams to Ohio to 1s. 3d. per word, the rate in each case having previously been 6d. per word. The old rate of 6d. was charged in error at the St. Austell office, and Mr. Lukes, therefore, paid £1 instead of £2 2s. 6d. Application was made to him for the amount undercharged, and it was fully explained to him that by law he was responsible, a copy of the judgment of the Court of Appeal in a similar case being furnished for his information. Mr. Lukes declined to pay the amount due, and there was no alternative but to enforce the claim; the full charges, less the Department's share of 1s. 10d., having been credited to the Telegraph Company concerned. It is regretted that the telegraphist made an incorrect charge in the first instance; and suitable notice has been taken of her carelessness. I do not find that Mr. Lukes had already paid the extra amount on the first message, or that he applied for the return of such payment.

TITHES IN WALES.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire made any earnest attempt to come to an understanding with the peasants in Penbryn, Cardiganshire, who were about to be distrained for tithe, or with their leaders, which would obviate the necessity of bringing large contingents of police from Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Glamorganshire, and mounted police from the county borough of Swansea; whether, during the distraints on 19th March, three responsible persons offered to give the Chief Constable a guarantee that if the police contingents were removed from the locality the distraints and sales would go on peacefully and that the peasantry would make but a peaceful protest; and whether he will advise the Chief Constable not to employ these contingents of police, which entail heavy expenditure and cause great irritation, till an endeavour has been made to come to a frank understanding with the people such as was repeatedly secured by the Chief Constable of Montgomeryshire?

***Mr. MATTHEWS**: I am informed by the Chief Constable that previous to the day fixed for the distraints—viz., the 19th inst.—he made careful inquiry as to the intention of the tithepayers in this parish, and was given to understand that they had unanimously resolved to refuse payment, and were determined to resist and illuse the bailiffs. He thereupon took with him as small a force of men as he thought would suffice to protect the bailiffs, and he often appealed in Welsh to the leaders of the peasants to assist him in keeping order. He denies that at any time to his knowledge three persons collectively offered the guarantee in question; but at different times some one or two persons asked him to withdraw the police. This he conceived he could not do without risk to the lives of the bailiffs. I wrote on Saturday last to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions asking whether an arrangement could not be made similar to that made in Montgomeryshire, whereby these regrettable collisions could be avoided. I have had an interview with the Chairman of Quarter Sessions this morning, and have expressed my earnest hope that this suggestion may be acted upon.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, who was the officer in command of the Carmarthenshire contingent of police employed on 19th March at Penbryn, Cardiganshire, in connection with the levying of tithe distraints; when, and by whom, was he appointed to his office; what was his age at the date of his appointment; and what experience in the police force had he gained prior to his appointment?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Chief Constable that Mr. Superintendent William Philipps was the officer in command on the occasion named. He was recently appointed to this office by the present Chief Constable, his father. Previously to that he had been chief clerk in the Chief Constable's office since 1883, and had, therefore, had five years' experience of police work.

Mr. ELLIS: About what age was the young man when he was appointed? Is there another son of the Chief Constable in his office, and paid for by the county?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Chief Constable that he was appointed in 1883, and that Mr. Philipps was 17 years of age.

CARDIGAN BAY.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the contemplated re-survey of Cardigan Bay may be delayed till the formation of the Cardigan Bay Fisheries Committee, so that it may be afforded facilities to present the points on which information useful to the development of the fishing industry might be supplied by the officers engaged in the survey; and whether he will allow a person duly appointed by the Sea Fisheries Committee, and acquainted with the local conditions of sea fishing, to be placed on board the surveying ship?

Lord G. HAMILTON: I regret being unable to accede to the request of the hon. Member. The object of the survey is in Imperial interests and for the safety of navigation, which must not be subordinated to fishery or local interests. The surveying officers will be glad to consider the requirements of the Fisheries Committee if they can do so without delaying their primary duties, but I cannot consent to an alteration of plans or the placing of a nominee of the Committee on board the surveying vessel.

IRELAND—BALLYHALBERT PIER.

Colonel WARING asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that, on the 12th day of December, 1885, the Secretary of the Fishery Piers and Harbours Commission wrote to Mr. John Warnock, solicitor for the promoters of the Ballyhalbert Pier, to the following effect—

> "That the Commissioners were now prepared to recommend a free grant of three-fourths of the sum of £7,000, which the work is estimated to cost, on the remaining one-fourth being provided from local sources";

and that the said one-fourth was so provided, £1,400 being presented by the Grand Jury of the County of Down on the county at large, and £350 being locally subscribed and lodged with the Board of Works; whether the grant of £7,000 was thereupon sanctioned by the Treasury; whether the amount of the contract now completed was £5,700; whether representations have been made by those best acquainted with the locality that the work as executed is insufficient to afford the accommodation intended and required, and that the expenditure of the balance of £1,300 on works which have been suggested would remedy this defect; and, whether, in fulfilment of the assurance given on 14th March that Ballyhalbert Pier should not suffer in consequence of works elsewhere having proved more expensive than was anticipated, he is prepared to order this expenditure during the coming summer; or should that be out of his power, whether he will direct the sum of £325, one-fourth of the unexpended surplus, to be refunded to the Grand Jury of the County of Down and the subscribers in proportion to their original contributions?

Mr. JACKSON: The facts are as stated in the first three paragraphs of the question. I am advised that it is doubtful whether further expenditure would be justified by results. I admit that there are special circumstances in this case, and some apparent hardship on the locality, and I am considering whether any relief can be afforded without raising a dangerous precedent.

MARINE INSURANCE.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT asked the President of the Board of Trade if his attention had been called to the article in the *Nineteenth Century* Magazine, by Mr. Samuel Plimsoll, entitled "Twelve Millions Wasted in The Sea"; and if it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to re-introduce the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, prohibiting the insurance of vessels and their cargoes in material excess of their value?

*Sir M. HICKS-BEACH: Yes, Sir, I have read this article. It is well that public opinion should be directed to this most important subject, but I fear that I cannot promise legislation this year.

IRELAND — THE IMPRISONMENT OF MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN, M.P.

Mr. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has ascertained that at the instance of "suspects" confined in Dundalk Gaol in 1881 a Prisons Board Inquiry was held, and the prisoners were permitted to be present at the examination of the officials and to cross-examine them; and whether this precedent will be applied to the case of the inquiry into the prison treatment of Mr. William O'Brien?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that it is the case that an inquiry was held at Dundalk Prison in December, 1881, into various complaints made by "suspect" prisoners, and that certain of these prisoners were permitted to be present and to cross-examine, but that this would not form a precedent in the case of the inquiry into the prison treatment of Mr. William O'Brien, inasmuch as he was neither the person complained against nor complaining.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask whether this so-called inquiry was closed last Wednesday without calling Dr. Ryan, the Mayor of Clonmel, or any of the Visiting Justices; and whether, in view of the undertaking given by the Chief Secretary that Mr. O'Brien would be called, the opportunity will be given?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. O'Brien has been examined. With regard to the other gentlemen, if they can show that they could give any direct evidence bearing on the matter, no doubt they will be examined. As to the Mayor of Clonmel, he has stated in this House that his information has been derived from Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask whether, as the hon. Member the Mayor of Clonmel and Dr. Ryan could give important direct evidence as to the condition in which they found Mr. O'Brien, they will be heard?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am desirous of following precedent; but I am not aware of what the precedent is. If these gentlemen have direct evidence to give, I suppose the Inspector conducting the inquiry will have no objection to hearing it.

THE ANCKETILL ESTATE.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland if he has ascertained by whom the order, purporting to be the Judgment of Judge Flanagan, was entered in the books of the Land Judges Court (Ireland), under date 3rd August 1881, in the case of the Scottish Provident Institution, petitioners, *v.* Hugh Gill Patterson, tenant on the Ancketill Estate, county Monaghan, and which was subsequently discharged by Judge Flanagan on 3rd June, 1882; and, if so, what steps the Government intend taking to deal with the person or persons by whom the entry was made, and the Registrar in whose custody the books are? I would also like to ask whether, considering that it has been alleged, and, I think, proved, that the order was forced against the tenant in the interest of the Insurance Company, he will not direct an investigation in order to ascertain by whom the order was enforced. Further, I would like to know if the Judgment was enforced at the instance of Mr. Scott, the solicitor to the Scotch Provident Institution, and whether he thinks it advisable——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member must give notice of these questions in the usual way.

Mr. O'BRIEN: I must respectfully submit to your ruling, Sir, but I included these questions in the notice which I handed in at the Table.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! They were struck out because they were not in order.

MR. O'BRIEN: But Sir——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. O'BRIEN: Then, as I am not allowed to put my questions in this way, I will bring the matter up on the Estimates.

THE NEW NAVY PROGRAMME.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the actual net increase on the Shipbuilding Vote, as proposed for the next five years, is as a matter of fact only £9,635,000, arrived at by the following calculation:—New Programme, as stated, £21,500,000; less Armaments, £2,850,000; total, £18,650,000; wastage, as described in page 16 of Statement, Naval Estimates 1887, allowing for five years, £9,015,000; actual increase on Shipbuilding Vote, £9,635,000?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The amount of new construction, excluding cost of armament and incidental charges, for which provision is made under our scheme during the next five years, is as follows:—Ships in hand, £1,550,000; New Programme, £16,150,000; provision for fresh work as New Programme approaches completion in 1893-4, £3,000,000; total, £20,700,000; abate wastage on the Fleet calculated on same basis, £9,200,000; total, £11,500,000. It must be remembered that naval shipbuilding is a going concern. We have to associate the completion of ships in hand with the commencement of a New Programme, and as the New Programme approaches completion to combine its finish with the laying down of new ships for the future. Our New Programme is therefore only part of the work of new construction for which provision has been made during the next five years.

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD: Arising out of the answer to the question, may I ask the noble Lord if the £21,000,000 includes the sum to be expended on ships not yet completed?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: Yes, I stated that the amount of money necessary to complete the ships so far as construction is concerned was £1,550,000.

THE IMMIGRATION OF FOREIGNERS.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if his attention has been called to the continuous stream of able-bodied British and Irish emigrants to trans-oceanic lands, where their labour and wages will be adequately protected from foreign competition and depreciation, while the immigration into the United Kingdom of considerable numbers of expatriated pauper foreigners continues unchecked; and if it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take any steps in the matter, or to re-constitute the Select Committee of last Session on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners), with a view to speedy and definite proposals being made on the subject?

MR. J. T. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): May I ask whether the passage in the hon. Member's question which says that "their labour and wages would be adequately protected from foreign competition and depreciation" is not argumentative, and therefore inadmissible as a question?

*MR. SPEAKER: It would be better if that portion of the hon. Member's question had been omitted.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the evidence taken, and reported by the Select Committee last year, did not negative the allegation that any considerable immigration of expatriated foreign paupers took place?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In answer to the last question, I have not been able myself to refer to the evidence given before the Select Committee; but that evidence is still incomplete, and it would be quite out of the question to arrive at a conclusion upon it one way or the other. In answer to my hon. Friend behind me (Mr. Howard Vincent), he will see that there is a Motion down on to-day's Paper for the re-appointment of the Select Committee on Emigration and Immigration of Foreigners.

PERPETUAL PENSIONS.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can now fix the date for the discussion of the Motion disagreeing with the Treasury Minute on Perpetual Pensions?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: It depends solely on the progress made with the Civil Service Estimates. I hope to find an early opportunity.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: The right hon. Gentleman says he hopes to find time. Does he intend to do so?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: Certainly, Sir, as soon as possible.

LONDON COAL AND WINE DUES.

Sir JOSEPH PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has noticed that, at a recent meeting of the London County Council, that Council declared its opinion by a majority of 76 votes to 34, "that it was inexpedient to renew the London Coal and Wine Duties Act," which expires on July 1889; and whether Her Majesty's Government are still of opinion that that Act should not be renewed?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: The Government adhere to the view which they have repeatedly expressed, that this is a question primarily for the decision of the Metropolis itself, and they will not, therefore, take any steps to bring about a renewal of the Act in question.

PENSIONS TO LORDS OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will consent to the issue of the Return showing the names of all present Lords of Parliament who are in receipt of public moneys from the National Exchequer (presented to the House of Lords in November last), in order that it may be distributed amongst Members of the House of Commons before the discussions on the Estimates for the coming financial year are entered upon?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: I have ascertained that there are a sufficient number of the Returns in stock to meet ordinary requirements, and in order, therefore, to save the expense of reprinting I have arranged that copies can be obtained by application at the Vote Office.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, seeing the large amount of interest on both sides of the House taken in the Motion which has the first place on 2nd April, he can give an assurance that the Government will not move the suspension of the Standing Orders on that date?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: I am not at present aware of any necessity for asking the House to suspend the Standing Orders on Tuesday, the 2nd of April, and I have personally the strongest wish that the Motion of the hon. Gentleman (referring to the condition of the poor in large towns) shall be discussed; but he will see that it is impossible for me to come under any positive engagement which would tie my hands against any conceivable emergency.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON NAVAL AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether it is true that Captain Hall (Royal Navy) has been appointed to command a ship of war at sea, thereby causing a vacancy for the post of Naval Secretary to the Royal Commission on the System of Administration for the Naval and Military Services; if so, whether the vacancy is filled up by another Naval Officer; and, if not, whether it is intended to fill it up?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: It is the case that Captain Hall has recently been appointed to the command of a ship, and has therefore withdrawn from the post of one of the Secretaries to the Royal Commission; but as the Commission has very nearly completed its labours, it has not been thought necessary to appoint another Naval Officer.

PORTRUSH NATIONAL SCHOOL.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the National School of Marsh Street, Portrush, county Antrim, was entitled by the numbers of its scholars to have a second monitor appointed in the month of June last; whether the name of a female monitor, one Annie Scott, was supplied six or eight weeks prior to 9th June to the District Inspector; whether the District Inspector failed to forward such name to the National Board, and thereby the school has been deprived of the assistance of a monitor, and has had its teaching staff weakened for a whole year, it being stated that no monitor can be appointed till June next; whether the Board is, through a mistake of its clerk, responsible for ten weeks' delay in dealing with the managers' complaint in this matter, and then failed to remedy it; and whether the Board will, without further delay, allow the appointment of the suggested female monitor, and so stop further injury to the school, especially in the next yearly examination?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR. The Commissioners of National Education inform me that no school is entitled to have a monitor on the ground of numbers alone. The name of the candidate monitor referred to, was not brought under the notice of the Inspector until the 4th of June. He thereupon declined to recommend the proposed appointment, as the school already possessed one female monitor. The manager of the school wrote some three months afterwards to the Commissioners on the subject. The fact that their reply to this communication went to the wrong address in no way prejudiced the question, the Board being of the opinion that the Inspector acted properly in the matter. The Board is unable to hold out any hope that the candidate will be appointed as second female monitor in this school when monitors throughout Ireland are being next appointed in July.

THE TRAFFIC IN ETHER IN IRELAND

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that at the last meeting of the Synod of the Church of Ireland a petition was adopted praying Parliament to regulate the traffic in ether in Ireland; whether there is reason to believe that ether is used extensively as an intoxicant in certain portions of the counties of Londonderry and Tyrone; whether attention has been drawn to this by coroners, medical officers, the police, and the officials of county lunatic asylums in Ireland; and if he will consider whether anything can be done to stop this great and increasing evil?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The petition referred to appears to have been adopted as stated. The constabulary authorities report, as regards parts of Londonderry, that it is the case that ether is constantly used as an intoxicant, and the resident physician of the asylum reports that insanity in his district is produced in many instances by an indulgence in this pernicious habit, combined with other causes. The constabulary report, with respect to county Tyrone, that the habit of ether drinking exists in two localities, but in a limited degree. The resident physician of the asylum states that he cannot refer to any particular cases where insanity has been attributable to the habit in his district, but that such has been the case is the general opinion there.

MILITIA PERMANENT STAFF.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended that paymaster sergeants and orderly room sergeants serving with Militia on army engagements, and who have attained the highest non-commissioned rank, are to be deprived of such rank in order to become assistants to paymaster sergeants and orderly room sergeants of regimental depôts, who are in almost every case junior to the former by service, rank, and clerical experience; and whether it is in contemplation at once to discharge such members of the permanent staff of Militia with the rate of pension to which they would be entitled on attaining the age for compulsory retirement?

*__MR. E. STANHOPE__: There is no intention of altering the status of paymaster-sergeants or orderly-room sergeants appointed to the permanent staff of the Militia before the 1st of March 1888, and therefore it is unnecessary to discharge, for that reason, any of them. Those appointed after that date will be styled assistant paymaster-sergeants and assistant orderly-room sergeants.

CUSTOMS STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT.

MR. MACDONALD CAMERON asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is intended that the seven hours' scheme shall be applied to the Upper Division section of clerks in the Statistical Department of Her Majesty's Customs, or whether the forthcoming reorganization, and consequent reduction of the staff, will affect the Lower Division only; and, if so, whether he will give instructions that the three Upper Division vacancies in that Department be at once allotted to the redundant clerks, who are entitled to them by a specific arrangement sanctioned by Treasury Minute of 12th May, 1880?

Mr. JACKSON: The application of the seven hours' system to the Upper Division of the Statistical Department is suspended for the present. There is only one vacancy at present to which the redundant clerks can claim to be promoted, and I must await further information before deciding what is to be done about it.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON: I wish to know if it is true that the Board of Customs are making arrangements to fix the time for the higher officers in that establishment at 11 o'clock instead of 10?

Mr. JACKSON: I am not aware of that.

THE MERCHANDIZE MARKS ACT.

Mr. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Report and General Orders of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs relating to "The Merchandize Marks Act, 1887," and contained in the Thirty-second Report on the Customs, convey the impression that in the opinion of the Commissioners the Act applies exclusively to imported manufactured articles, and not to domestic manufactures; and whether the Commissioners purpose to administer the Act in relation only to imported manufactured articles?

Mr. JACKSON: There was no intention of conveying the impression referred to. The Commissioners of Customs are only concerned with that part of the Act which refers to imported goods, and, therefore, their Report and General Orders are restricted to the sections of the Act that are administered by them.

THE CHILIAN NITRATE LOAN.

Mr. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the following question which was placed on the Paper on August 30th, 1887,

> "Whether his attention has been drawn to a new Chilian Nitrate Loan for £1,113,781 which has been negotiated with the firm of Messrs. Rothschild, and is to be issued on the 1st of next month. And whether, taking into consideration that the nitrate deposits of Tarapaca, hypothecated for this loan, have already, by a decree of the Executive Government of Peru, dated 11th July 1871, been specially and absolutely hypothecated for the Loan of 1872 for £3,600,000, the Government will draw the attention of the Chilian Government and Messrs. Rothschild to this fact, with the view that the claims of the creditors on the revenues of Tarapaca will be recognized to the fullest extent warranted by justice and International Law,"

and which was withdrawn on the understanding that the Chilian Government intended to recognize the claims of the creditors on the revenues of Tarapaca, whether the Chilian Government intend to carry out their promise; and when?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Governnment are not aware of any such understanding as is mentioned by the hon. Member—namely, that the Chilian Government intended to recognize the claims of the Peruvian creditors on the revenues of Tarapaca. What Her Majesty's Government understood was that the Chilian Government were prepared to negotiate for the settlement of those claims, and communications have passed between the two Governments on the subject, but they have not led as yet to any practical result.

THE MUSSEL COMMITTEE.

Mr. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate why the Report of the Mussel Committee has not yet been distributed?

*Sir J. P. B. ROBERTSON (Buteshire): The Report was laid on the Table of the House on 15th March. The matter is, therefore, in the hands of the printer. I am informed that they hope to issue it before the end of this week.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): May I ask the Vice President of the Council for Education when the new Code will be issued?

Sir W. HART DYKE: It will be distributed to hon. Members to-morrow.

ORDERS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I rise, Sir, to ask you whether the Attorney General was entitled to vote on the Motion in Committee of Supply last Friday to reduce his salary, it having been laid down in "Erskine May" that no Member who has a direct pecuniary interest in the question should be allowed to vote upon it; but that in order to operate as a disqualification that interest must be an immediate pecuniary interest, and not of a general or remote character? I wish to ask whether the vote of the Attorney General in reference to his own salary was admissible according to the Orders of the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: The Motion to reduce the salary was merely made in this case to raise the question as to the conduct of the hon. and learned Gentleman, which is a very different thing from a question in which the hon. and learned gentleman would have a "direct pecuniary interest."

IRELAND—THE GWEEDORE PRISONERS.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary if it is true that the Governor of Derry Gaol has again refused to allow the female prisoners from Gweedore to use the dress provided for them by their friends, and that they have again been obliged to go bare-headed and badly clothed a long journey, although sufficient clothing was sent to the prison for them? I wish to know if the Governor of Derry Gaol has been guilty of such conduct in distinct violation of the pledge given to me last Thursday?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I have only received notice of this question since I entered the House, I have not been able to inquire into the matter, but I think the hon. Member has put the question under some misapprehension. There has been no such hardship as he has indicated.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—MORNING SITTINGS.

MR. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Does the First Lord of the Treasury intend to take a Morning Sitting to-morrow; and, if so, will he infringe upon the rights of private Members at the Evening Sitting?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Is it intended to take the Civil Service Estimates in the ordinary order?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: There will be a Morning Sitting to-morrow for the Civil Service Estimates, which, however, will not be taken in the evening. The usual order will be followed with regard to the Estimates, except in the case of the Vote for the Submarine Telegraph. That is a new Vote, and may have to be taken out of the ordinary course. I hope that Friday will be a private Member's day, but I cannot, of course, foresee contingencies on the Opposition side of the House.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if it is intended to hand over all the land in Western Australia suitable for European Colonization to a handful of Colonists, and to take it away from Imperial control?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: No, Sir; the Government have no such intention. I have previously answered several questions put by the hon. Member on exactly the same subject; and I can only repeat that it is absolutely impossible for me to enter into the details of a scheme which has not yet been decided upon, and which, before it is definitely adopted, must come before Parliament in a special Bill.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I shall draw attention to the subject in Committee of Supply.

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES.

Address for—

"Return showing, with regard to each Parliamentary Constituency in the United Kingdom, the number of Electors on the Register now in force (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 144, of Session, 1888)." — (*Mr. Thomas Ellis.*)

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

Return ordered—

"Arranged according to Counties, showing the number of Accounts of Depositors in Post Office Savings Banks in the United Kingdom remaining open on the 31st day of December, 1888, together with the amount, inclusive of interest, standing to the credit of those Accounts (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 201, of Session 1888)."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

——o——

SUPPLY.—REPORT.

Resolution [20th March] reported:

"That a sum, not exceeding £3,729,203, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charge for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, viz.:—

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION—THE CONDUCT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL — PERSONAL EXPLANATION — SIR CHARLES RUSSELL.

***SIR C. RUSSELL (Hackney, S.):** Before rising, I paused for a moment or two in order to see whether the Attorney General would desire first to address the House by way of explanation or otherwise. I ask permission of the House to make an explanation with reference to a certain assertion of fact made by the Attorney General in the debate on Friday night, with which my name was prominently associated. I shall best put the House in possession of the matter in controversy if I read some letters which have passed between the Attorney General and myself. On Saturday evening—unfortunately the letter was forwarded after the Attorney General had left town—I wrote the following letter—

"10 New Court, Lincoln's-inn, March 23.

Dear Attorney General,—I have read with complete astonishment your statement last night in answer to Harcourt. I can hardly believe that you are correctly reported. It is absolutely incorrect to say, or in any form of words to convey, that before Pigott's examination, or indeed before his flight, I had called for, or indeed been referred to, or had had the slightest intimation, direct or indirect, that Pigott had, in letters to Mr. Soames or to Mr. Houston, discredited the value of his testimony.

This is a grave matter, and must be set right.

Pray let me have an answer promptly.

Faithfully C. RUSSELL.

The Attorney General, M.P."

The Attorney General received my letter, as he informed me, at 10 o'clock on Sunday night. His reply is as follows:—

"Hornton Lodge, Kensington, March 24.
10.30 p.m.

Dear Russell,—I found your note on my return home an hour ago.

I only wish I had received it yesterday before I left town, as I would have gone through the shorthand notes.

I spoke from recollection on Friday, and if I have made a mistake I will frankly correct it, but my recollection is that you called for all Pigott's letters during Soames's cross-examination, and I undertook to produce them. One or two days afterwards I handed you the printed bundle of letters. I think, but I speak only from recollection, that Soames's letter of November 15 refers to Pigott's letter to Houston of the 11th. I know that I twice tried to read that letter of the 15th before Pigott was called, and you requested me to postpone doing so.

Having regard to Harcourt's attack, and the grounds of it, the point is not, in my opinion, of importance. But I believe my recollection to be accurate.

I have written a brief statement of my recollection to *The Times*. I hope it will appear to-morrow.

I send this reply within an hour of my return, so I think you will agree that I have been prompt.

I am very truly yours,
RICHARD WEBSTER.

Sir Charles Russell, Q.C., M.P."

That letter I received this morning. I at once dictated the letter I am about to read to my clerk, but it did not reach the Attorney General until half-past 1 o'clock—

"10, New Court, Lincoln's Inn, Monday.

Dear Attorney General,—I thank you for your letter received a few minutes ago.

I am sorry my letter of Saturday did not reach you before you left town. I wrote to you immediately on my leaving Court on Saturday, and as soon as I read your statement in the House.

That statement was understood to convey that five days before Pigott was in the box you had put into my possession evidence in a specific letter under Pigott's hand tending to discredit his testimony—in other words, that you had thus furnished me with valuable materials for cross-examination to his credit.

I am confident you will see that in this you are absolutely mistaken. Neither are you correct in saying that I called for any letter between Mr. Soames and Pigott, except the 'arrangement letter' of Mr. Soames. I do not understand your reference to a printed bundle of letters. You offered to produce that letter of Mr. Soames, *i.e.*, of November 15, after Pigott had actually been called and immediately before he was examined, and you will see from your own observation made at the time that that letter had not been produced, much less handed to me, previously, for you then say that I had complained of its not having been forthcoming before, and this letter had been alluded to as the *Times*' arrangement with Pigott, both by you and by me. But more. I never knew the contents of Mr. Soames's letter of November 15 to Pigott until after the flight of the latter; and indeed that letter would not have told me that Pigott had, in any letter to Mr. Soames, discredited himself, for, although it acknowledges Pigott's letter of the 11th, it is not in any way conversant with the value of Pigott's testimony, but relates to the 'arrangement in writing,' as you call it, of the *Times* that Pigott should not come to harm. I assure you most positively that Pigott's discrediting letters came upon my colleagues and myself after Pigott's disappearance as a complete revelation I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing Asquith, but I know he agrees with the view I have expressed, for he telegraphed to me on Saturday —'I do not understand the Attorney General's statement.' I wish to add that while I did, more than once to you, and openly in Court, complain of your conduct of the case and still do complain of it, I have not imputed to you, and do not impute to you, dishonourable conduct, and I shall say so in the House. I thought, and I think, that you were led away by the political character of the case into a course of conduct which, on cooler reflection, and in less exciting circumstances, you would not have pursued.

Faithfully,

C. RUSSELL.

Excuse my dictating to my clerk, but I am pressed."

I was absent from the House on Friday, and the reason of my absence, I did hope, would have been understood and appreciated on both sides of the House. I wish in this relation to make a few observations in reference to my absence on Friday. My reason for being absent I thought would have been appreciated on both sides of the House. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury (Sir Henry James) made an allusion to me, an allusion—kindly meant, as I understand—but the effect of that allusion, the impression it conveyed on this Bench, was that my absence from the discussion was due to the fact that I approved of, or was not prepared to condemn, the conduct of the Attorney General. Now, I wish to express exactly what was the state of the case. I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham (Mr. A. Morley) that I desired to be completely dissociated from the matter. My hon. Friend then said that my absence would be misconstrued—that hon. Members might get up and point to my absence as a proof that I was not, in point of fact, ready to say here what I have said elsewhere. I then authorized my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham to say——

Several hon. MEMBERS: Member for Newcastle.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: No; my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham. I had no communication with my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle. I gave my hon. Friend authority in case my absence should be referred to in any such fashion, to explain distinctly to the House what is correctly expressed in the letter I have just read—that I did think—I do think; I regret to say I still think—that the conduct of the case has been practically unfair to the defendants in the case; but I do draw—and I am very glad to be able to say so much—a broad line of distinction between conduct of which I feel bound to hold the opinions I entertain, and the imputation of dishonourable conduct to the Attorney General. I have nothing to withdraw from the opinion I expressed in the letter. Now, I do not know whether I should supplement my statement and correspondence—which gives, at least, the pith of the matter—by a reference to the evidence? I am prepared to do so if the House will bear with me. In order to understand the matter it is necessary to refer to what took place in the debate on Friday. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby in the course of his speech said—

"I wish to know when the Attorney General was made acquainted with the letter of November 17 in which Pigott declared his own infamy and informed Mr. Houston and Mr. Soames that if he went into the witness-box his character would be made known, with the result that the case for the prosecution would be destroyed? I should have thought that it was the first duty of those concerned to ascertain the character and the credibility of a witness upon whose evidence this foul and monstrous charge alone rested."

In reference to and in answer to that, the Attorney General, who had previously stated that he was prepared to give chapter and verse, is reported to have spoken as follows:—

"Will the Committee listen to this statement of simple dates? I have told the House that I knew of this letter in the middle of December. Before Pigott went into the box—five days before—I put that letter into the hands of the hon. and learned Member for South Hackney."

The earlier part of the Attorney General's speech shows that he was referring not to the letter of November 15th but to the letter of 11th November. That is so?

SIR R. WEBSTER: Of the 11th.

*SIR C. RUSSELL: Then the Attorney General goes on—

"So if it was desirable that the other side should know—if they ought to know—that the man's character was discredited, I myself had given that information. ["Withdraw!"] Hon. Members who have cheered me do not want the charges withdrawn. They have been refuted by evidence which cannot be disputed. In the course of Mr. Soames's evidence, which was given some days before the 20th of February, the letter was called for, and I produced it and handed it to the hon. and learned Member for Hackney before Pigott went into the box.

"Sir W. HARCOURT: Two months afterwards.

"The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The right hon. Gentleman says two months afterwards."

Then the Attorney General went on to say that was not the pith of the accusation, and so on. I think I can make the case pretty clear by referring to the occasion on which the matter came before the Court. Mr. Soames has been repeatedly in the box, and so far as this matter is concerned I may begin with his examination, or his cross-examination, on the 15th of February. On page 2903 of the proceedings I call for the memorandum of Pigott's evidence. Mr. Soames said it was taken from Pigott on 19th October, and in order that the House may follow the bearing of these circumstances let me remind the House that there are three letters in question. On the 11th of November Pigott wrote a letter, called a discrediting letter, to Houston, and Houston destroyed that letter; but fortunately Pigott sent a copy of that letter under cover of another letter to Mr. Soames. The letter of the 11th of November is acknowledged by Mr. Soames on the 15th of November that is the "arrangement letter." It is followed by a further discrediting letter of Pigott's own on the 17th of November. Now, the next point is this. On the same date, 15th February, pages 2918 and 2919, I called for the Pigott-Houston letters. It is rather important that I should call the attention of the House to this, for the Attorney General may possibly be misled on this point. On page 2918, I asked, in cross-examination, "Have letters passed between Richard Pigott and Mr. Houston?—Yes. When did you get them?—About a week or ten days ago. From whom?—From Mr. Macdonald." That is, Mr. Macdonald of the *Times*. So it is obvious that the answers do not refer to the letter in question, the letter of 11th November, because that letter was sent to Mr. Soames himself. Then a little lower down in the Report it will be seen I call for the Pigott-Labouchere correspondence, and the Memorandum sent by Labouchere to Pigott. Then I asked a question as to the statement which was put into writing almost immediately, and put into the form of a Statutory Declaration. That does not touch the letter in question. Then, on 2922—I think it will be convenient to the Attorney General that I should give these references—the letter of arrangement, as it has been called, is referred to, but that letter is neither produced nor called for at that time. On page 2923, Pigott's statement of further evidence he was prepared to give is also referred to; it was neither called for nor produced; but there was produced the Statutory Declaration given by Pigott to Houston. Up to this time, neither directly nor indirectly, was there any reference to any letter of the 11th of November, or of any other date, having been written by Pigott to Mr. Soames. At the end of Mr. Soames' cross-examination, at page 2931, the papers which had been previously referred to, and which did not include any letters, were asked for and produced. Then came Mr. Macdonald, and after his evidence came the attempt to anticipate Pigott's evidence by calling experts. I will not discuss that now. I am sorry to have had to allude to it even so far, but it was necessary to do it, because we are rapidly approaching the examination of Mr. Houston on the 19th of February. At page 2983 the Statutory Declaration is produced, and a memorandum of conversation with Eugene Davis is asked for at page 2995. On the 20th of November Houston is still under cross-examination, and it was on that day that Pigott made his first appearance in the box. Up to this time there was not a shadow of ground for the suggestion that the letters of Pigott to Mr. Houston and Mr. Soames of the 11th of November and 17th November, and Mr. Soames' letter of the 15th November were referred to in any way. I was cross-examining Houston (see page 3016) when a noticeable circumstance occurred. I was cross-examining Houston, and I asked him whether he still believed in Pigott, and he said that up to that time he had had no reason to doubt him, and still anticipated that he would do what he had promised to do, although he did not like Pigott's interview with Mr. Labouchere. I ask the House is it possible, supposing I had had at that time any information as to the existence of the letter which Pigott himself had written to the witness in the box, and which the witness had destroyed, and in which letter Pigott had discredited himself, I should not have put a question about it to Houston. On the same occasion, in page 3031 of the shorthand notes, the arrangement in writing is referred to as not having been up to then produced. At the bottom of page 3035 the Attorney General's re-examination proceeds—

"Before Mr. Pigott comes I will put in a letter Sir C. Russell has called for of November 15th, but which has not been produced—the arrangement in writing."

This is the Attorney General's description of it. It was a letter in which Mr. Soames acknowledged the letter of the 11th, and made no reference whatever to its discrediting character so far as Pigott's evidence was concerned. Then I said I would wish that put in when Mr. Pigott was in the box.

"The Attorney General: As a matter of fact you did not. If you say so now it is another matter. I give it to my learned friend now.

"Sir C. Russell: I said so at the end of my cross-examination.

"The Attorney General: When you called for it Mr. Soames was in the box, and you asked for it, and rather complained of our not having it at the time.

"Sir C. Russell: No.

"The Attorney General: It is not worth discussing, however, my Lords. I tender it at any time."

Though Pigott had been called he was not actually in the box, and I did not even then get the letter (though the Attorney General did offer to put it in) of the 15th November. But even if I had got that letter it could not have shown that Pigott was a discreditable witness. I wish to make this matter perfectly plain. On February 26 Pigott had disappeared, never to re-appear in the witness-box, and Houston was recalled. On page 3209 of the shorthand notes appears the following—

"The Attorney General: There is one matter I submit to your Lordships should come first in fairness and justice. Your Lordships will remember in the course of Mr. Soames being in the box Sir Charles Russell called for a communication between Mr. Pigott and Mr. Soames, and Mr. Soames at once said he would produce it.

Sir C. Russell: I do not object to it.

The Attorney General: On my offering that it should be put in, Sir Charles Russell asked me to postpone it until Mr. Pigott was in the box. I have no doubt Sir Charles would have read it at some time or other, but I ask to be allowed to put Mr. Soames in the box before anything else is done, and your Lordships will get from him the communications that he had with Pigott on the subject. I venture to think that my learned friend will agree this is a right course.

Sir C. Russell: I have no objection at all, provided I am at liberty to call Mr. George Lewis.

The Attorney General: That is no condition at all.

The President: We will adjourn.

The Court adjourned."

Up to this time it is clear that the letter of the 15th of November had not been put in; that is perfectly obvious. What then takes place? After the adjournment the Attorney General said—

"I was about to read a letter from Pigott to Mr. Soames; but I will take the course at present suggested, and will read the letter of the 15th of November and the letter of the 11th, which is referred to in it, which were those which were called for by Sir Charles Russell."

I ask the Attorney General to refer to any syllable or line, or to any suggestion, great or small, direct or indirect, where I ever referred to the letter of the 11th of November. I could not have done it, because I did not know of its existence. The Attorney General goes on to say—

"Your Lordships will afterwards judge whether the other should be read or not. I read the 15th of November—first, I had better read the 11th of November, 1888, from Mr. Pigott to Mr. Soames:—'I enclose you a copy of a letter I am sending Mr. Harrison by this post, to which I must earnestly request your earliest attention'—that is, the 11th of November from Dublin. The letter enclosed is in these terms—'8th November, from Pigott to Houston. Dear Sir,—Enclosed completes story of the negotiations.'

The witness: No; that is not the letter, I think.

The 8th of November, I think?—No, that is not the enclosure.

How does it begin?—The enclosure is the 11th of November, 1888.

Have you got it?—I have.

Just read it, please.

The President: Is this the letter which was enclosed in the letter of the 11th?—It is a letter written to me, my Lord, by Mr. Pigott, enclosing a copy of a letter that he had written the same day addressed to Mr. Houston.

Not, then, of the 8th of November?—No; that is another letter."

Now, again, I ask the Attorney General either to admit that he has made a mistake—we may differ as to the importance of the mistake—or to point out any passage in the whole of the evidence to show there was, from the beginning to the end, any reference to any letter of November 11th. Now, this remarkable passage occurs. According to the statement of the Attorney General, I am supposed to have had this letter in my possession since February 20th, five days before February 26th. On the occasion in question, what happened? I asked—

> "Have you got any copy of this?
> The Attorney General: Read it, please.
> Sir Charles Russell: Kindly give me a copy.
> The Attorney General: I have not got a copy."

Yet it is said that that document, of which I was asking for a copy, had been in my possession for five days. I do not know that there is any other matter to which I desire to call attention. I can assure the House—and I hope that those on both sides of the House who know me will believe me when I say it—it is no pleasure to me—far from it—to have to say one word in reference to this matter, and if it had not been for the mistaken kindness on the part of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Bury, I certainly should not have intervened to-night. But I feel called upon to give an explanation on a matter of fact, and though it may give pain to the Attorney General—which I greatly regret—to express my honest feeling and opinion as to the mode, which I do not think a fair one, in which the case has been conducted.

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I shall not detain the House for more than a very few minutes. If I have made any mistake I shall frankly admit it. I will merely state my belief in the matter in the same way as my hon. and learned Friend has stated his, and if I am in error I do not know whether the difference between us will ever be solved, but I will state to the House exactly the material on which I form my judgment. I respect my hon. and learned Friend's recollection, and I ask him to give the same credit to my recollection. I must ask to be allowed to make one or two preliminary remarks, which I shall do without the slightest feeling. I only regret that my hon. and learned Friend was not in the House when the attack was made upon me, because I think he would have shared with me the feelings of indignation at the imputations which were made upon me by the right hon. Member for Derby. It is all very well for my hon. and learned Friend to say that he makes no imputation upon my honour, but it is hardly possible for any one who heard the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby to think that he made none. That right hon. Gentleman brought eight or nine charges against me, every one of which I answered. I undertake to say that I have answered every one of them, though I will not undertake to say I satisfied every hon. Member on the other side. The suggestion now made is that in respect of one part of one of those charges I am mistaken in fact. I do not believe that I made any mistake; but if I did say that, it is upon an almost immaterial point. ["Oh!"] I am sure my hon. and learned Friend will deal fairly with me; it is of no use for the right hon. Member for Derby to express silent signs of contempt. The charge made against me is that I kept back—and this is the sting of the charge—from the Court all knowledge of the letters of the 11th and of the 17th of November. I admit at once that I was under some misapprehension as to the date. I had no notice at the time of the particular details of the charges—of that I do not complain; but, as a matter of fact, I had no notice of them. I had to rely entirely upon my memory. I had not the shorthand notes to refer to, and I made a mistake as to a date, as I did last night when I wrote my letter. I thought that the letter so much commented on by the right hon. Member for Derby was the letter of Soames to Pigott of November 15. I did not apply my mind to the letter of the 17th of November. What I had in my mind was the letter of the 11th, which I thought was the letter of the 15th. That letter was described by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby as being a letter in which Pigott declared his own infamy, and informed Mr. Houston and Mr. Soames that if he went into the witness-box his character would be known, with the result the case for the prosecution would be destroyed. I said in the House that that was an absolutely incorrect representation of what Pigott's letter was. I said there was no word in Pigott's letter, be it that letter of the 11th, 15th, or 17th, which justified any such statement. But the charge was that I kept that letter back from the Court. Now, I am not complaining to my hon. and learned Friend, who conducted the case with great forensic ability; but will any barrister kindly consider what the real facts are? I will put the case worse against myself. I agree that I was wrong about the five days I quoted from memory. I believe I should have said two days. I will explain exactly how the error arose. I had nothing to go by except my recollection of the actual course of events. On February 20 last I specifically asked to be allowed to put in the letter of November 15, 1888. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby will be good enough to follow me upon a question of my *bonâ fides* in this matter. I offered to put in the letter of November 15, 1888. How does that letter commence, and the House will then see whether this argument of my hon. and learned Friend is really possible. The letter of November 15 begins—

> "I am in receipt of yours of the 11th, enclosing a copy of a letter you have addressed to Mr. Houston."

Is there any barrister, or anybody who ever practised at all, who will suggest that if I had been allowed to read that letter of November 15 I could have declined to put in the enclosure referred to of November 11? The mistake has arisen entirely from my not having the shorthand notes with me. Thinking that the letter to which reference has been made was under date the 15th, I referred to it as the letter of that date. It must be remembered that although I knew more than a month ago the debate was to be raised, I received not the slightest idea from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby of the nature of the charges he was going to bring against me. All I can say is that I meant to put in before the Court, and I offered to put in, a letter of November 15; and if that letter had been read the result would have been this—that then the letter of November 11 must also have been read. Let me tell the House exactly how the matter stands. My hon. and learned Friend desires to discuss here a matter which he may afterwards desire to discuss before the Court.

SIR C. RUSSELL: I assure you I do not.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: My hon. and learned Friend cannot make an attack upon me without my being allowed to make a reply. He has said he is going to attack me in the Commission. I am perfectly aware of it, and I said before the Commission that I would bear with resignation the attacks to be subsequently made by my hon. and learned Friend. It is before the Commission that my conduct in reference to the case will have to be discussed. But this debate is raised upon this, comparatively speaking, minor point, because my hon. and learned Friend elected that no single part of the Pigott correspondence should be read until Pigott went into the box. My hon. and learned Friend will not differ from me on that point; but I was bound to produce it all. I ask my hon. and learned Friend just to let me tell what my recollection is. I do not agree with his very minute criticism of the shorthand writer's notes, but I will tell the House how I understood the particular answer to which he attached so much importance. I do not at all agree that when he asked for the Pigott and Houston correspondence he simply meant to ask for the letters which came from Mr. Macdonald. It is perfectly plain he did not; for, in the same breath, he asked for the Pigott and Labouchere, the Houston and Pigott, and the Pigott and George Lewis correspondence. Now, I assert that not one of these latter ever was in the hands of Mr. Macdonald; and I assert that the correspondence of Pigott and Labouchere and of George Lewis and Pigott was never in any hands except those of Mr. Houston and Mr. Soames. Therefore, so far from only intending to call for the letters in the hands of Mr. Macdonald, my hon. and learned Friend asked distinctly for all correspondence and the Statutory declaration. My hon. and learned Friend's memory misleads him. He asked for the letters which had come from Mr. Macdonald, and then made a general request for the letters Mr. Soames had. But he did not stop there. Before the adjournment on that day my hon. and learned Friend asked Mr. Soames whether he had got the papers. Mr. Soames said he had not been able to get them, but would get them after the adjournment of the Court. The 15th of February, I wish the House to remember, was a Friday, which is the reason I came to make the mistake about the five days. I have endeavoured to ascertain the accuracy of my recollection by asking Mr. Soames distinctly as to what was done; and I will state to the House the result of my conversation with Mr. Soames. On the Friday, or the Saturday following, printed copies of the correspondence were prepared to be handed to counsel in different bundles. My recollection is distinct that on the following Tuesday morning I handed to my hon. and learned Friend the Pigott and Soames bundle of letters. He says "No." Has he searched his papers? Is he sure the bundle is not among his papers? It really is immaterial on the merits of the matter; but I believe there will be found among the papers the very bundle that I handed to him. It may be that he handed it back to Mr. Soames; he very often did hand back bundles if they were not going to be put in. But my recollection is distinct that I handed it to my hon. and learned Friend, and I asked him to let me then read the letter of November 15, which, if there was any cat to be let out of the bag, would have let out the cat with respect to the letter of November 11. I repeat, although it is almost childish to argue it, that if I put in a letter of the 15th I could not decline to put in a letter of the 11th referred to in it. My hon. and learned Friend is not only a most astute man in all these matters, but he was assisted by juniors who are rapidly following in his steps. And they would immediately have called for that letter, and I should have had to produce it. I can only say I believe I handed a bundle to my hon. and learned Friend on Tuesday, February 19. I may be mistaken. I can only state what I stated in a letter written last night, and which appears in the *Times* this morning. I do not say that my hon. and learned Friend ever read the letter. I have never suggested anything of the kind. It may be that, inasmuch as he was not going to deal with the matter until Pigott went into the box, he did not consider it of sufficient importance to look the bundle through. But Mr. Soames informs me, quite independently of my own statement, that his recollection is distinct that the bundle was handed to my hon. and learned Friend. Have the papers been looked through to see whether that bundle is in existence or not? It is perfectly clear from Mr. Soames's examination of February 20 that I handed some document to my hon and learned Friend, and that he said he did not wish it read until Pigott was in the box. I say again, my hon. and learned Friend must not and will not misrepresent me in what I have not stated. I had not the slightest communication with anybody last night when I wrote my letter. I wrote from recollection, and without any reference to shorthand notes at all. I ask the House to allow me to read from that letter, because I cannot put the matter more distinctly. I wrote that "In the course of Mr. Soames's cross-examination Sir Charles Russell asked for all letters which had passed between Mr. Soames and Pigott, and I undertook to produce them; that the next day or the next day but one"—of course I meant by that the next day when the Court assembled—"I handed Sir Charles Russell a printed bundle of the correspondence containing, as I believe, copies of Pigott's letter, of November 15 and November 17." Now, the House will judge whether I meant to mislead anyone. What did I say:—"As far as my memory serves me, the copy of Pigott's letter to Mr. Houston of the 11th of November was not in the bundle, but as to this my recollection is not distinct." I admit that, in so far as the other night I referred to the Pigott letter as a separate and distinct document of November 15th, I was wrong. I ought really to have referred to it as a document of November 11th which was referred to in Mr. Soames' letter. I only wish to read one concluding sentence, and to ask whether it does not represent my position fairly. The charge made against me by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby was that I had kept these matters back from the Court; that I had vouched Pigott as a witness of truth, and had not told the Court that there was this letter in my possession. That letter would have been read just before Pigott was produced, but that my hon. and learned Friend elected that the correspondence should not be read until Pigott was in the box. I do not believe that any one will deny that after reading the letter of the 15th, the letter of the 11th of November must have come out, and, of course, I intended that it should come out. May I remind the House that on the 26th of February I actually mentioned the letter of the 11th of November as one which had been called for by my hon. and learned Friend?

Accordingly, this is the position. The charge of the right hon. Gentleman was this—that I had kept back those letters and put Pigott into the box without disclosing them. I state again that I wished that correspondence to be read before Pigott went into the box. I state again, as I stated on Friday with warmth —I do not apologize for that warmth—that when I tendered that letter of the 15th of November I tendered it as part of the correspondence, and I meant to produce the letter of the 11th. The whole of this debate has been raised for the purpose of justifying the conduct of my hon. and learned Friend, because he thought fit not to put in these letters before Pigott was called. ["Oh!"] The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby may say "Oh!" as much as he likes. How is the position of Friday night altered from that of to-night? Is there any honest person who will suggest that I kept back the letter of the 15th of November? ["Yes."] Is there any one to suggest that I tried to keep back the letter of the 15th of November? ["Yes."] I repeat again if my hon. and learned Friend says he never saw these letters, I believe that he never did see them, or has no recollection of it. But I ask him to respect my recollection, which is, that when I handed him the bundle, my hon. and learned Friend did not wish the letter read until Pigott was in the box. The charge against me on Friday night is without foundation. I disclosed, and ordered to be prepared and put in, all the letters that passed on Tuesday morning, the 19th. I repeat my recollections and strong belief that if the papers are searched it will be found, and that the only reason they were not put in when produced was because my hon. and learned Friend desired to keep them back. I do not think the attempt to prove me in the wrong is worth the amount of discussion which has taken place. It has necessitated my going into the matter at some length. I have shown no warmth, I have simply dealt with the question as one of fact. It is only one of the many charges, and one part of many charges, which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby thought it right to bring against me, and it is some satisfaction that it is upon this point only that the Party opposite have been able to find the slightest rift in the joints of my armour.

*MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I can assure the House it is with reluctance that I rise to intervene in this debate. Like my hon. and learned Friend (Sir C. Russell) I took no part in the discussion or the division on Friday night. I abstained for reasons which I should have thought would have been free from the misconception of the most unscrupulous partisans, but the matter has now reached a stage when, in the interest of historical accuracy, if upon no other grounds, I must endeavour to make perfectly clear the actual state of the case. The Attorney General says this point is of very minor importance. That is a matter of opinion. I was not present in the House during the debate on Friday, but we read in the papers that no part of the hon. and learned Gentleman's speech was received with such tumultuous applause as the declaration that he had spontaneously volunteered, five days before Pigott went into the box, to furnish to the other side materials for testing this witness of truth whom he was about to produce.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I have corrected five days. I said I was wrong about that.

*MR. ASQUITH: Quite so; but I am dealing with the importance of the point. Now, what are the facts as they have been elucidated from the shorthand notes, and the statement of my hon. and learned Friend (Sir C. Russell)? Instead of this letter of the 11th of November being produced voluntarily—if it ever was produced at all—it was produced in response to a call in cross-examination, which had to be responded to. Instead of the letter being produced, upon the Attorney General's own admission, five days before, it was tendered on the 20th of February, just as Pigott was about to enter the box. Now, that is common ground between us. As to the letter itself, I assert—and I have as clear a recollection of the matter as I have of anything that ever took place in my life—I assert that neither my hon. and learned Friend nor myself—and I need not say we were in the closest communication in this matter—had the ghost of a glimmering of a notion that there was a letter from Pigott in which he announced that his testimony could not be relied upon. When Pigott went into the box, although we knew something about his antecedents, we believed that he was being put forward as a witness of truth, just as informer after informer had been put forward in the earlier stages of the case. That being so, let me call attention to one remarkable statement made by the Attorney General. His statement the other night was that he had communicated to us the incriminating letters in which Pigott admits he would be discredited on cross-examination. What is his statement to-day? That he had tendered in evidence the letter of the 15th of November, not from Pigott to Soames, but from Soames to Pigott, which contained a reference to the letter of the 11th of November from Pigott to Soames, and that if that letter had been put in then there would have been an opportunity of calling for the letter of the 11th of November. Does he really mean to say that these two statements amount to the same thing? I will not comment upon that statement; the facts are before the House. The shorthand notes bear out in every particular the recollection of my hon. Friend which tallies with my own; and I leave the matter to the honest judgment of any fair-minded and impartial man who reads the statements on both sides.

Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I have no desire to aggravate the position of the Attorney General, which must be somewhat painful to him. He has said that this is a matter of no importance. It is wonderful how the importance of things varies according to their issues. We are told now that the forged letter is a matter of no importance. It was not considered a matter of no importance when it was published in the *Times* on the morning of the Second Reading of the Coercion Bill. Now, we are told that this point is of no importance; but the House on Friday night thought it was of importance, as every one will remember. The Attorney General said that he had no notice that he was expected to refer to this matter. I am surprised at that, as I referred to it at Derby and Lambeth, and warned him that he would be asked in this House as to the letter of the 11th of November.

*Sir R. WEBSTER: The right hon. Gentleman did not say a word in his speeches about my keeping the letters back.

Sir W. HARCOURT: That was my object in challenging him. I asked him when he knew of them. I never supposed he could have known of them and not communicate them. The Attorney General has spoken of my charge against him. What was my charge against him? I said before, and I repeat now, that the Attorney General two months and a half before Pigott came into the box knew that he was a discreditable and discredited witness. I say upon that that it was the duty of any public prosecutor to make inquiry—I do not mean personally, but to instruct his solicitor to inquire into the character of that man. I said that he ought not in a criminal prosecution to produce a man of that character without giving some notice to the accused. This is altogether a foolish attempt to raise a side issue. The real issue is whether Pigott should have been called or not. What I said was that a man who knew what the Attorney General knew in December ought not to lie by and endeavour to keep alive until the last moment the charge involved in the forged letters against the hon. Member for Cork, and to encourage the *Times*, knowing what he knew, to publish what it did publish every morning. The Attorney General, I said, had kept back his knowledge until the last moment, and only revealed it when driven to the last extremity. It is quite certain that to the defence that letter was never known until the 26th of February, when Pigott had left the country, and if he had not left it would have only postponed the knowledge for another week in order to keep the calumny alive. What answer is there to that? There is no answer; it is confirmed like the rest — like the apology—out of the mouth of the Attorney General. There is one circumstance which is conclusive against the version which the Attorney General has offered to the House. He says that he gave the letters——

*Sir R. WEBSTER: I did give them.

Sir W. HARCOURT: It is an extraordinary thing, if my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney and my hon. and learned Friend for Dumbarton received letters of that kind, that they did not understand them. Does anybody believe that for a single moment? I say they were not given. There is another circumstance deserving of observation. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney referred to the cross-examination of Houston. That cross-examination took place in the presence of the Attorney General, the Attorney General knew that Houston had been informed by Pigott that he was a discredited and discreditable witness, and yet the witness said, "I had complete confidence in Pigott. and had no reason to doubt him." The Attorney General knew that was a false statement, and yet he sat by while he heard a statement made to the Court which he knew to be false. The hon. and learned Gentleman sits by and allows that evidence to be presented as truth. I think that such a thing is altogether unknown in the criminal jurisprudence of this country. ["Oh!" from the Ministerial Benches.] Then you approve of it. That is worthy of you. When documents have been proved to be forgeries you assert they are true; when such proceedings as this in a criminal prosecution are brought before you you say that is what you wished your Attorney General to do, and you admire him for having done it. Here this witness states in the presence of the Attorney General that which the Attorney General knows to be false. ["Oh, oh!"] Yes, he did know it. Houston had stated to him that he had no confidence in Pigott's evidence.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: I am most unwilling to interpose, but I say distinctly that there is not the slightest shadow of foundation for the statement that I either knew or had any reason to know that the answer of Mr. Houston was not true.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Houston was called in February. On the 17th of February Pigott had written a letter. There were two letters, one on the 11th of November by Pigott to Houston, the other on the 17th of November by Pigott to Soames. The purport of both was exactly the same, though the expressions are different. The letter to Soames said:—

> "I am bound again to warn you that my testimony will be certain to be so sensibly weakened in cross-examination as to be seriously injured."

Yet the Attorney General considers that consistent with Houston swearing that he had confidence in Pigott Does he think it worth while to let that statement go to the House; aye, and to the country? Look how this case has been dealt with. Soames knew the case of the *Times* to be rotten. Certainly in November when he received that letter, he knew that Pigott was not to be trusted; the Attorney General knew about the letter on the 12th of December, and he, therefore, also knew the case to be rotten; and yet we have all these combined to keep alive the charge against the hon. Member for Cork. They called the experts first, and this is the only explanation the Attorney General has to give. If there was any doubt about the matter, they ought to have brought it forward and disposed of it at the earliest moment. If they had any reason to doubt the evidence of Pigott, they ought to have called him in November or December, so that the matter might have been investigated and dealt with, and if the evidence, as they had every reason to believe, was not to be depended upon, then the hon. Member for Cork would at least have been discharged from this odious imputation. You may spin cobwebs of miserable professional etiquette. The common sense of the country will see that they are a pretence. It will see that a number of men having reason to suspect that the charges were false and the evidence insufficient combined to keep those charges alive until the very last moment. And why? Because they knew the moment they were brought forward, they would break down and their falsehood would be detected, that was the reason they kept them alive. It was one of the most deliberate acts of professional cruelty and injustice which could be inflicted by an Attorney General or a Public Prosecutor. That is the reason why I thought it my duty, knowing the opinion of counsel in the case, to use the words "deliberate unfairness" or the word "unfairness" which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney has used. The Attorney General has imputed to me that I charged him with dishonourable conduct. I never used the word. People's ideas of honour differ. Your ideas of honour may be that unfairness is honourable. That is the charge, mark you—unfairness to the accused under such an accusation as the hon. Member for Cork laboured under, unfairness by a man in the position of the Queen's Attorney General commanding all the influence and all the power of the Crown. Unfairness is charged against him by the counsel to whom he was opposed, and he says, "Oh, that is a very different thing from a charge of dishonour." That I will not enter into. My charge against the Attorney General was and is in this House, and shall be out of this House——[*Ministerial laughter.*] Oh, yes, you are not going to determine this question now. You are very much mistaken if you think so. This case, which lies at the very root of the administration of justice, and which shows how the principles you have introduced into Irish Justice are poisoning the administration, will go before the judgment of the country. I say that a more lamentable example of the degradation of the principles which have hitherto governed and distinguished the Bar was never brought under the final judgment of the country.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir E. CLARKE, Plymouth): There is not much "miserable etiquette" about the right hon. Gentleman, either professional or otherwise. With a just admiration for his own speeches, he has taken advantage of the opportunity of the conversation which has arisen this afternoon for repeating, with somewhat livelier tones and with additional declamation, the speech which he made last Friday evening. I am not going to re-open the whole controversy. I do not think the House wishes at length to discuss the whole matter again. My hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney have both made statements to the House this evening with regard to a matter of fact upon which their memories do not agree. ["Oh," and *laughter.*] I should deserve to be smiled at if I said their memories did agree. Each has appealed to the shorthand notes. The right hon. Gentleman has said that he did not charge my hon. and learned Friend with dishonourable conduct. Does he charge him with dishonourable conduct now?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I will tell the Solicitor General what I charge the Attorney General with. I charge him with what my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney (Sir Charles Russell) has charged him with—the unfair conduct of a criminal prosecution.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL: Now, Mr. Speaker, the House shall be witness and judge. The right hon. Gentleman does not answer with a "yes" my question whether he charges my hon. Friend with dishonourable conduct or not. He says that standards of honour are different. I hope there is no one in the House who will listen to the words I am about to read, taken down from the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman this afternoon, and then doubt whether he has made a charge of dishonourable conduct against my hon. and learned Friend. He said of my hon. and learned Friend that "on Friday night he thought it worth while to make this statement to influence the judgment of the House." The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that in saying that a man has thought it worth while to make a statement, the accuracy and truthfulness of which he knew could not be sustained, you are charging him with as clear an act of dishonour as it is possible to conceive.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The words "worth while" were used in relation to the hon. and learned Gentleman's statement that it was not a matter of importance.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL: No, Sir, I cannot accept that statement. The right hon. Gentleman said that my hon. and learned Friend thought it worth while to make the statement in order to influence the judgment of the House. If the right hon. Gentleman means to say that a gentleman of honour can have such an accusation made against him without repelling it with indignation, then certainly the canons of honourable conduct with which he is acquainted are hardly those which will be accepted by the majority of this House. The right hon. Gentleman has made another charge against my hon. and learned Friend, and it is one of a very serious character—that he sat silent while Houston gave evidence which he knew to be false, and that it was his duty to have interposed. Now, in the evidence of Houston, in the passage to which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for South Hackney referred, there was no duty whatever on the part of Counsel to interpose. There was no statement there made by Houston as to a matter of fact upon which any counsel in the case knew he was telling an untruth. What Houston said was that until Pigott had made a declaration on oath his mind was not easy, as he knew that a large bribe had been offered to him. On November 11, Pigott wrote his letter expressing his unwillingness to come forward, and warning those acting for the *Times* that his cross-examination would most certainly tend to discredit his evidence in chief. There was a perfectly obvious reason for which Pigott was then trying to escape the necessity of going into the witness-box, and he states that reason quite clearly in his letter of the 17th. He says: "May I suggest as an alternative that I should not be asked to come forward, but be provided with means to leave the country—at least, for a long period." He goes on to add that the effect of his evidence might be neutralized by cross-examination. ["Hear, hear!" *from the Front Opposition Bench*]. The right hon. Gentleman who sits open-mouthed to cheer every comma is not a Member of the Bar. Does he mean to suggest that because a witness fears that his evidence may be neutralized by cross-examination, that that makes him a discreditable witness. As I have said already there was an obvious reason why Pigott should try to escape the necessity of going into the witness-box. I am not going to break through the rule which I observed on Friday, and which I intend to observe, namely, that, until the Commissioners have pronounced a judgment on this part of the case I will not discuss the conduct of the case or what has taken place before the Commissioners except so far as may be absolutely necessary in regard to debate in this House; but I say, after reading the passages in the letters I have referred to, and seeing the statements which were made by Houston in cross-examination, it is idle to suggest that any sort of duty called on the counsel appearing for the *Times* at that investigation to interfere and make any statement with regard to Houston. I spoke of this incident as a conversation. It really is. I expected it to be a personal statement on the part of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney, who desired to clear up his relation to the debate on Friday, and on the part of my hon. and learned Friend, whose recollection as expressed on Friday had been challenged in the public papers. There was not, I think, any necessity for the area of the debate being widened by the recurrence of the right hon. Gentleman to his attack on Friday. I do not understand how there can be a doubt in his own mind as to the tenour and purport of the language which he used in this House. At all events, I hold that here again there has been an absolute and entire failure to attach to my hon. and learned Friend that stigma which, in the heat and vigour of Party antagonism, it was attempted to throw upon him on Friday.

Mr. LABOUCHÈRE (Northampton): I think that if the wishes of Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench were consulted the area of the debate would be exceedingly small. Let me tell the House the reason Pigott gave me why he did not wish to appear in the witness box. It was because he had forged the letters. The Solicitor General has asked whether we charge the Attorney General with dishonourable conduct. We have specified and proved what the hon. and learned Gentleman has done, and we leave it to others outside this House to decide whether he has acted honourably or dishonourably. We do not assert the one or the other, but we leave it to the constituencies of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, and the constituencies of all of us, to decide. One point with which the Solicitor General was exceedingly indignant was that the right hon. Member for Derby should have said that the Attorney General sat still while Houston made statements in the witness box which he must have known to be false. Why, Houston must have known his statement to be false when he said he still believed in Pigott. It did not depend on any interview Pigott had with me, although that might have shaken Houston's confidence in his own witness. It depended on his statement made, not on November 11, but in a letter referred to in the letter of November 11, which was written by Pigott to Houston in May, 1887. I say no one could have received a letter like that, in regard to a witness of the importance of Pigott, without having grave doubts about him. What did Houston do? Why, when he was over in Dublin, where the reputation of Pigott was notorious, he absolutely did not ask anybody what they knew of him. Why, Sir, it is clear that Houston knew perfectly well that Pigott was a notorious scoundrel at that time. But he took uncommon good care not to ask anyone; Mr. Soames took very good care not to ask Houston, and the Attorney General took very good care not to ask Soames or anybody else. That is the real truth of the matter. But, Sir, I was really asking myself just now what it is that hon. Gentlemen opposite are not prepared to cheer? I was complaining that certain letters written by Pigott to Mr. Soames, the solicitor, were not produced in Court. On Friday night the Attorney General said, "I did disclose them," and hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House cheered rapturously. To-day he gets up and says, "I did not disclose them," and hon. Gentlemen opposite still cheer. No matter what the Attorney General may assert — he may say to-day black is white, and to-morrow white is black — he will still command the subservient cheers of hon. Gentlemen on the other side. The Attorney General asserts that he gave these letters in a bundle to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Hackney; but of that there is not one vestige or tittle of confirmation in the shorthand notes, which are taken verbatim. He says to the hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir Charles Russell), "Look among your papers; you must surely find those letters in your papers. It may be," he says—and I point out this sort of special pleading, which we are becoming accustomed to—"that you did not read them, and that you gave them back to Mr. Soames." Has Mr. Soames looked among his papers? Are they in Mr. Soames' papers? Of course, they are not; how, then, could my learned Friend possibly have given them back to him? The Attorney General further told us that he had no copies in Court of the letters. Were these originals thrown about, and no copies made of them? Yet we are asked to believe that these original letters, which were about the most important matters, were thrown to gentlemen who were conducting the defence, that they did not pick them up, that Mr. Soames might have got them, but that he has not got them, that he does not know whether he got them, and that they must have fallen down and disappeared somewhere. No, Sir; the Attorney General can hardly hope to better the most unfortunate position in which, I am sorry to say, he is at present in regard to public opinion in this House and out of it, by such utter and gross special pleading as we have heard from him this evening. The Attorney General observed that had the Member for South Hackney been in his place on Friday night, he would have been indignant at the charges made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member of Derby. Sir, it is time that we should have a clear and distinct understanding whether lawyers in this House are to be lawyers first and representatives afterwards, or Members first and lawyers afterwards. I do not complain of the Gentlemen who are engaged in this case on this side of the House, that they did not vote. I think it would have been far more decorous had the Attorney General not voted that he was an honourable man. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury distinguished himself by the tone of his speech on Friday, and walked out of the House and did not vote. But I want to know what became of the other lawyers who were not in the case? What became of the hon. and learned Gentleman sitting on that Bench (the front Opposition Bench). We have had trouble enough to get that Gentleman into the House, and he does not add very much to our strength in debate. If he is not going to vote for us, what does he come here for? I find the *Times* defiant and boastful this morning because our lawyers did not vote against the Attorney General, whereas the lawyers on the other side voted rapturously in favour of him. The *Times* tells us that the action of these lawyers was a silent protest against the action of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby. "This demonstration was not less significant because it was for the most part silent," but Mr. Osborne Morgan and Mr. Bryce "sank their professional character in that of partizans." Did hon. Gentlemen opposite sink their professional character in that of partizans when they voted for the Attorney General? All I say is this, are we to have this understanding in the House, that when a lawyer is accused of doing anything out of the House, all the lawyers on one side are to vote for him and all the lawyers on the other side are to walk out? Let us understand. There is a letter in the *Times* from the hon. and learned Member for Cambridgeshire, who says there is but one feeling among practising barristers holding the opinions of the hon. Gentleman himself—one of regret and shame that such charges should have been brought by a once law officer of the Crown. Is my right hon. Friend, because he was once a law officer of the Crown, never to bring an accusation against a lawyer? Those ideas are degrading and derogatory to the honour of this House, and they are entirely contrary to any sort of principle upon which representative Government is based. The Attorney General got up to-night and said perhaps he had made a little mistake, very trifling and unimportant. But, Sir, he did not answer one of the charges brought by my right hon. Friend. My right hon. Friend asked him whether he had been consulted by the Government as to the Special Commission. His answer was, "I cannot disclose." He was then asked if the Government had given their assent. As I understood, the Government had given their assent, though I believe, as a matter of fact, they are obliged to give their assent, or certify, when a Queen's Counsel is engaged in a criminal matter. Then he was accused of giving no names of witnesses, and he replied, "I was not going to give the names, because of the fear of their being intimidated." But this is a public case, in which certain gentlemen are charged with being the aiders and abettors of assasination. Lord Justice Cockburn is precisely such an authority as the hon. and learned Gentleman would reverence. Many are old enough to remember what took place in 1856. Sir Alexander Cockburn, then Attorney General, prosecuted Palmer for murder. He not only gave the names of the witnesses, but he furnished pieces of the evidence which they were going to give, so anxious was he that justice should be done. But in these proceedings the Attorney General declined to give the proofs of witness after witness to those who were engaged for the defence. He made it doubly difficult for the defence. Sir, every resource in the category of chicanery has been exhausted in order to blacken and defame gentlemen who are Members of this House. I say I am glad that this debate has taken place. I trust that again and again we shall recur to this point, until the country thoroughly and distinctly understands that we, at least, on this side of the House protest against this conduct, and openly and frankly express our opinion that it is base and scandalous.

Mr. WHITBREAD (Bedford): Mr. Speaker, I beg to be allowed to say a few words. I must revert to the speech of the Solicitor General, who read a portion of the letters of the 11th and 17th November. Does the Solicitor General pretend to tell an assembly of this kind that those two letters contained nothing which would rouse the suspicion of any solicitor or any barrister that the man who wrote them was not a witness of truth, and could not stand to the testimony that he had undertaken to give? I do not think the Solicitor General would assert any such thing. The Prosecution were not satisfied even then that Pigott would do as Houston had said—fulfil his promises—until they had got from him a sworn undertaking. They thought they had him in the vice then. The Solicitor General has read almost all the passages referring to Houston's evidence. What did Houston say? That his faith in Pigott was shaken, not, mark, by the letter of the 17th November, which he had in his pocket, or in his possession, but simply because Pigott paid a visit to the hon. Member (Mr. Labouchere); so that all the while the Attorney General must have known that the reason which Houston gave for doubting the truthfulness of the witness was not the two letters in which Pigott admitted that he would be shaken in cross-examination, but the fact that Pigott had paid a visit to the hon. Member for Northampton. There is, however, a graver question than this to which no answer has been given. How comes it that, knowing as they must have known, and as they would admit that they knew, that Pigott was a doubtful witness to say the least of it —how came it, in Heaven's name, that they still kept the charge alive, ever since the day that they became possessed of that letter up to the time they put Pigott into the box? Not one word of justification has been urged for this course. This seems to me to be the *gravamen* of the charge. The Attorney General allowed his client the *Times*, with its enormous circulation, to go on parading in the forefront of its broad sheet these charges and *fac-similes* and all the rest of it, and for two and a-half months he kept the hon. Member for Cork with this dreadful charge hanging over him, when he must have known that, not in generosity, but in the simplest and most elementary justice, he ought to have brought that charge to an issue. There has been no justification offered for this. We must draw our own conclusions, and the conclusion to which I am driven is that it was hoped that the tar of all the rest of the accusations might possibly stick to the surface, even if it were brightened and cleaned by this other dreadful charge. It seems to me that the connection of the Attorney General with this case has been most unfortunate from beginning to end. It was the Attorney General's connection with the case that really led to the creation of the Commission. When the Attorney General, sitting face to face with hon. Gentlemen from Ireland opposite, said that in open Court he would prove these charges, and especially the letters, I felt that the position of hon. Gentlemen sitting for Ireland on that side of the House was an intolerable one, and that they must accept almost any tribunal that was offered. If I had had a Bar training I might have drawn a distinction between what the Attorney General said as counsel and what he said as a Member of this House. What moved me was, that I thought, not that the hon. and learned Gentleman had pledged his personal word as to the truth of the charges, but that he did think that virtually they were true and that he could prove them. The Attorney General shakes his head, and in future I shall understand, when I am listening to counsel in this House, that I am to regard him as only speaking from instructions, even on such grave occasions as this. We were told when the Commission was formed that the Governmend desired to act with the strictest impartiality, and to give the hon. Member for Cork an opportunity of clearing his character. I want to know whether that desire was accompanied by an earnest wish that the hon. Member should succeed in clearing his character, or was there a covert hope that he might fail in doing so? I must again draw my conclusions from events; and I ask hon. Gentlemen opposite whether in all this long controversy, step by step as they have walked with the *Times* and the accuser in this matter, they can point to one, even the most halting, step that they have taken to help to vindicate the character of their Irish colleagues in this House?

Mr. Whitbread

*MR. C. HALL: I regret I was not in my place when the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) commenced the remarks in which he did me the honour to refer to me; but I understood the hon. Gentleman to say, as I entered the House just now, that the letter I have written to one of the daily papers was a proceeding derogatory to the privileges of the House. Although I did not hear the whole of his speech, I make bold to say that, with the greatest respect to this House, I decline to withdraw a single word I wrote in that letter, and I am the more justified in so saying, as I have been fortified by the opinions of many of my professional brethren since I wrote it. I do not intend to follow the example of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bedford (Mr. Whitbread) whose speech would have been more appropriate to the debate of last Friday. He has dealt with topics that have not been referred to by any other Member to-day, and I will not be a party to enlarging the area of this discussion. I only wish to refer to one point which has been touched upon by most of the speakers this afternoon, and that is as to how far it was the duty of those who represented the *Times*, when they received the letters of the 11th and 17th of November, to immediately, or at any time before calling Pigott, communicate them to the other side. It seemed to be the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), on Friday last, that there are different standards of honourable conduct in civil and criminal cases. Sir, I can admit of no such distinction. Of course, in ordinary criminal cases, where the mouth of the prisoner is closed, those who represent the Crown do not heavily press the case against him, but where both parties are represented, whether you choose to call it a State prosecution, or a criminal prosecution, or a Special Commission, and where the accused can give evidence, no comparison can be made with an ordinary criminal prosecution. There is not a single hon. Member who practises at the bar who does not know that it is a common thing for counsel to find that witnesses in their brief have been tampered with by the other side, and have signed statements diametrically opposed to the former statements which they have given to the other side; but I am happy to say that it is not often the case that they are offered bribes of £1,000. It frequently happens that there are witnesses who, from the very nature of their occupation or employment, even if they are called, must be known to be hostile witnesses. Examples of this are frequent, for instance, in cases of collision at sea. A look out is a witness who must almost of necessity be called by those who represent the ship. He may have been tampered with by the other side, and frequently is, and the other side obtains a contradictory statement from him, a fact which comes to the knowledge of the opposing counsel. Does counsel, on learning this, withhold that witness? Certainly not. Does he do anything so ridiculous as to go to counsel on the other side and say "I find that one of my witnesses has given you a different statement from that which he has given me, and, therefore, I am bound to tell you what he has said"? The proposition has only to be stated to show its inherent absurdity. I have only one other observation to make. I wish to express the pleasure with which I heard my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney (Sir C. Russell) repudiate all participation in the charge of dishonourable conduct against the Attorney General. It is true that he says he has made complaints, and querulous complaints are frequently made by counsel as to the conduct of opponents during the progress and in the heat of a case; but that is far different to such charges as those brought by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. Sir, when my hon. and learned Friend said that he did not intend to bring any charge of dishonourable conduct against the Attorney General, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby gave an approving "hear, hear." But if he approved of the hon. and learned Gentleman for saying this, what excuse is there for the right hon. Gentleman's conduct on Friday evening? Why, he cheered the hon. Member for South Kilkenny to the echo when he spoke of the dishonourable, heartless, and shabby tactics of the Attorney General. Sir, it appears to me that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby meant to bring a charge of dishonourable conduct, which he now attempts to withdraw, under cover of the explanation of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney. Such conduct will commend itself neither to those who are outside nor inside this House. I may add that I cannot help thinking that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. Morley), after having heard the statement of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney, will see fit to modify somewhat the language he used on Friday evening, when he said he had his hon. and learned Friend's permission to state that he approved of the action taken by the Opposition, and I trust that in common fairness he will do so. It is clear that my hon. and learned Friend did not approve of the changes made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, for he has so stated in explicit terms to the House this evening.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle): The hon. and learned Member opposite has referred to me without, I think, any great necessity. I wish to tell the House, in reply to the challenge of the hon. and learned Gentleman, that I see no necessity whatever for modifying one word I said on Friday night. I will not now detain the House for more than half a moment. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney has told the House to-night he made a communication to my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham (Mr. A. J. Morley). That hon. Member came to me just before I rose, and said that the hon. and learned Member for Hackney authorized him to say that he concurred in our line of action. I took the words down from the lips of the hon. Member, I read them to him, and I said, "Are you quite sure that is what the hon. and learned Member for Hackney authorized you to say?" The hon. Member replied, "That is exactly the case." What the hon. and learned Member for Hackney has said to-night exactly tallies with that declaration, and I have no word to withdraw.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I desire to address myself to one point, and one point only, and perhaps, as the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General is unable to reply himself, he will instruct some other hon. and learned Gentleman to do so for him. As the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor General very correctly put it, there is a conflict of statement on which the memories of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney disagree; and the Solicitor General further put it—and I entirely agree with him—that the shorthand notes are the only things we have to help us in reference to this disagreement. Now, I think I understood the hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General to say, some time prior to the examination of Pigott, he handed to the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for South Hackney a bundle of printed copies, which included the letter from Soames to Pigott of the 15th November, and the letters of 11th November and 17th November.

*SIR R. WEBSTER: Not of the 11th November.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: At any rate the letter of the 17th November from Pigott to Soames. Now, I listened with attention to the reading of the shorthand notes of what happened on the 26th February, and it is to that I would draw the attention of the Attorney General. If I am right, it was at the time Mr. Soames was in the box, and one of the two letters which has just been referred to was about to be produced in evidence through Mr. Soames. The Attorney General asked Mr. Soames to read the letter of November 15 from Pigott, enclosing the letter of November 11 from Pigott to Houston. The hon. and learned Member for Hackney asked for a copy of the letter, and the Attorney General did not say, "I handed it to you in a bundle some days ago," but he replied, "I have not got a copy."

*SIR R. WEBSTER: The letter of the 11th November had not been copied.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: But some letters had been copied, and some copies had been, according to the memory of the Attorney General, handed to the Member for South Hackney. It occurs to me that it requires some explanation why the Attorney General did not say to the Member for South Hackney, "I handed you a bundle of printed letters the other day, in which you will find copies of this and the other letters, as to which Mr. Soames is going to give evidence?" I understood the Attorney General to say that the letters of November 11 and 17 from Pigott to Soames were in the bundle of printed letters which, some time prior to the examination of Pigott, had been handed over by Mr. Soames to the hon. and learned Member; but it now appears that the letter of the 11th of November had not been printed, although the Attorney General stated that he knew of it in the middle of December. How did it happen that this letter was not printed with the rest? How could it have been excluded unless it had been omitted by Mr. Soames? If the Attorney General had been aware of the absence of the letter of the 11th of November from the bundle of printed letters alleged to have been given to Sir Charles Russell, he should have called the attention of Sir Charles Russell to it. The incident as to this letter certainly seems to support the memory of the hon. and learned Member for Hackney when he is in conflict with the Attorney General.

MR. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General, as well as other hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, have, since the debate took place about this matter, found fault with Members sitting on these Benches for the attitude they have adopted. Well, I think if hon. Members will consider for a moment the position we have been placed in in this matter, they will come to the conclusion that instead of showing great excitement, or a warrantable amount of excitement, under all the circumstances we have been extremely and excessively calm. The whole Party representing the overwhelming bulk of the Irish nation have been charged with complicity with murder. Letters attributed to the hon. Member for Cork appeared in the *Times;* and when, for very sufficient reasons, the hon. Member for Cork did not go before a jury, over and over again upon the other side of the House he was twitted with not doing so; and when the Special Commission was appointed, we were told that it was appointed for the express purpose of giving the hon. Member for Cork and his Party an opportunity of clearing their character from the charge of complicity with murder. And, though we found fault more than once with the composition of the Commission, when the Bill was rushed through we were told that it was forced on because the Government were most anxious, whether the hon. Member for Cork liked it or not, that that hon. Member should have an opportunity of clearing his character from these letters. Well, the Commission began to sit, and nobody can possibly doubt that the letters were the chief charge against the hon. Member for Cork and his Party. But for those letters the Commission would never have been appointed. Might we not have expected, under the circumstances, in view of the protests from the other side of the House, that they would have given us every opportunity of clearing our characters? Instead of that, however, what was our surprise to find that nothing whatever was said of the letters—the chief charges against us. The hon. Member for Cork waited in vain for a single thing to be tendered in support of the monstrous charges made in those letters. What we have to complain of as the Representatives of the Irish nation is not so much that the Attorney General has failed to give this letter or that, but that the Attorney General and Mr. Soames and all connected with the *Times'* case must have known from the first mention of Pigott's name that they had no case. In the very exceptional circumstances, it was the primary duty of the Attorney General to say to Mr. Soames, "But who is this Pigott?" and to insist on reasonable steps being taken to test his credibility. Richard Pigott was the one witness upon whose testimony the letters rested; and is it to be believed for a moment that the Attorney General did not ask Mr. Soames what manner of man he was? When the Attorney General ascertained the character of Pigott, it was his duty as an honourable man to have at once put Pigott into the box, and thus have relieved 85 hon. Members of this House from the frightful charge that had been so long hanging over their heads. Instead of doing that, the hon. and learned Gentleman allowed the Commission to drag on for week after week, and only put Pigott into the box when he was absolutely compelled to do so by coming to the end of his case. Houston has been continually referred to as though he is a man of substance, whereas, in fact, he is, or was, nothing more than a reporter at so many shillings a week, on a Dublin Tory newspaper. In his position, however, as a reporter, he must have known all about Pigott. He must have known that Pigott was a man who lived by his wits. When the name of "Dick Pigott" was mentioned in such circles as those Houston moved in, every one knew "Oh, that is Pigott, the blackguard, the ruffian," and so on. And yet we are told that the Attorney General, in all the sweet simplicity of his character, knew nothing about the sort of man this Pigott was, and that Houston knew nothing about him. Sir, that will not go down with the Irish people, no, nor with the English people either. People when they hear this will say—"It was the business of the Attorney General, seeing the evidence was so slight, to at once bring the letters into Court and give the Irish Members an opportunity of proving them to be false and of vindicating their characters." I do not want to use un-Parliamentary language, but I say that such a conspiracy to keep alive a slander upon an honourable people and their Representatives the world has never before seen. A more cruel and unjust conspiracy was never entered into, and it is all the more cruel that the counsel engaged against us is not a private counsel, but a Member of the Government by whom the country is unfortunately ruled at the present time. I am not prepared to say that a great deal of the infamy of the proceedings does not attach to Mr. Soames, because it is impossible to suppose that neither he, nor Houston, nor Shannon knew the character of Pigott. Will the Attorney General get up in the House and say that he never heard a whisper against Pigott's character until he saw the letter of the 17th of November? Nothing that the Attorney General has yet said will relieve his name in history from the charge of having conducted this inquiry against 85 of his Parliamentary colleagues with unfairness. I shall continue to denounce this foul conspiracy until the Attorney General resigns, which public opinion will soon force him to do.

*Mr. LANE (Cork Co., E.): As we have been debarred up to the present from an opportunity of discussing a single matter relating to Ireland locally, in consequence of the general wish that these charges against the Attorney General should occupy the attention of the House, I now wish to call to the notice of hon. Members a matter of grave importance to my division and also to the whole of the people of the South of Ireland. I have to make a complaint against the Chief Secretary for Ireland in reference to the manner in which he has treated me on several recent days at question time. If the Chief Secretary attended to his duties in the way he ought to do it would be unnecessary for me to have to draw attention to this matter, which concerns a protracted struggle on one of the most noted estates in the South of Ireland. It appears that a syndicate of gentlemen has been formed in London, headed by the hon. Member for South Huntingdonshire, to purchase a well-known estate in Munster, and to prevent a settlement which was almost concluded with the Ponsonby tenants. I gave the hon. Member for South Hunts full notice of my intention to bring his conduct before the House.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The subject which the hon. Member is bringing under the notice of the House has no connection with the salary of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, which is now under discussion.

*Mr. LANE: I wish to refer, Sir, to this mater——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The remarks the hon. Gentleman is making have no reference to the salary of the Chief Secretary.

*Mr. LANE: The question I want to discuss is the manner in which the Chief Secretary conducts the duties of his office in Ireland. I complain that the right hon. Gentleman has refused to appoint any official under him in Ireland to inquire into the circumstances under which a settlement between the tenants on the Ponsonby Estate and their landlord has been prevented by this London syndicate. I say that if he properly conducted the business of his office he would take steps to prevent this grave crisis, which is calculated to lead to dangerous rioting and disturbances of a serious nature in the South of Ireland. Of course, if this is not in order I will bow to your ruling, Sir; but it is in his official capacity as administrator and guardian of the peace that I charge the Chief Secretary with neglect of his duty. I think it is quite pertinent to the vote for his salary, and I submit that he ought to have intervened.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Gentleman is clearly out of order. It is not a matter of which the Chief Secretary would be cognizant.

*Mr. J. P. GILL (Louth, S.): May I point out our complaint of the Chief Secretary——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. I have already said that the debate originated by the hon. Member is out of order.

Mr. GILL: What I wish to do, Sir, is to complain of what we hold to be the light and frivolous manner in which the Chief Secretary has treated our warnings upon this question.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is distinctly out of order. The hon. Gentleman does not show the slightest connection between the salary of the Chief Secretary and the subject which the hon. Gentleman wishes to bring under the notice of the House.

Mr. GILL: Will you allow me, Sir, for one moment——

*The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. A. BLANE (Armagh, S.): We contend that the Chief Secretary has interfered with the course of justice in Ireland. Last January there were a number of people committed for trial in the County of Donegal, and the Chief Secretary in the beginning of February met the Crown Prosecutor for the County in Dublin, and instructed him to get a change of venue.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is no part of my function to be mixed up in any Crown prosecution, nor have I ever done as suggested by the hon. Member.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must tell the hon. Gentleman that he is not in order.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH rose in his place and claimed to move that the Question be now put.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): On a point of order, Sir, I wish to know whether on the Report stage it is not in order to call attention to the conduct of the Chief Secretary?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Question put "That the Question be now put."

The House divided: Ayes, 142; Noes, 75. (Div. List, No. 39).

Question put accordingly, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

The House divided: Ayes, 143; Noes, 76. (Div. List, No. 40).

WAYS AND MEANS—REPORT.

Attention called to the number of Members in the House, and 40 Members being found in their places,

Resolution reported.

"That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, the sum of £3,729,203 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

"To apply a sum out of the Consolidated Fund to the service of the year ending on the thirty-first day of March one thousand eight hundred and ninety."

Presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

NAVAL DEFENCE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made and Question proposed,

"That it is expedient to authorize (a) the expenditure of a sum not exceeding £21,500,000, for the purpose of building, arming, equipping, and completing for sea vessels for Her Majesty's Navy; of this expenditure a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in the seven years ending on the 31st day of March 1896; and a sum not exceeding £11,500,000, to be issued out of moneys provided by Parliament for Naval Services during the five financial years ending on the 31st day of March 1894."—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I rise for the purpose of moving the Amendment of which I have given notice, and I cannot help expressing my regret that this important duty should have been left to be discharged by such a very humble Member of the House. Some of us had a right to expect that this very important proposal of Her Majesty's Government would have been met by sturdy opposition from above the Gangway on this side of the House. I cannot help expressing my deep regret that the Leaders of the Opposition have, as I conceive, neglected their duty towards the people of this country. On three grounds this proposal might very fairly be opposed—That no proof has been afforded to the country that any further expenditure is needed in this direction; that the country is afforded no guarantee that if this money is voted it will not be jobbed away and wasted as previous sums have been; and the third objection is the unconstitutional character of the proposal that has been submittted by Her Majesty's Government. On the last point, I do not presume to be capable of addressing the Committee. But that aspect of the subject will, I hope, be dealt with by some of our friends above the Gangway. Nor shall I ask the Committee to listen to any references from me to the second ground of opposition—namely, the waste and jobbery that takes place in Government Departments, and the manner in which large sums have been grossly misapplied, instead of being used as the House and the country intended they should be. I will confine myself to the absence of any necessity being shown for this expenditure. Let me briefly trace the growth of expenditure upon the Services for the last 30 or 40 years. Up to 1854, and for 40 years previous to that date, the expenditure upon the Army and Navy averaged something like £15,000,000 annually. Then we were, unfortunately, afflicted with the Crimean War, and I cannot help thinking that the statesmen who were responsible for having dragged this country into that terrible war incurred very heavy responsibility, not merely on account of the immediate cost, but for the terrible financial burdens which it has since entailed on this country. For 40 years previous to that war the expenditure on the Services was 15 millions annually, but in 1856 the expenditure went up from 15 millions to 52 millions, and, unfortunately, a great part of it remained. The expenditure never returned to what I would describe as its normal condition. The result of that war was to make a permanent addition to the expenditure on the Services of 12 millions a-year, so that for 32 years, which is the period that has elapsed since the Crimean War, we have been paying 12 millions a-year more on the Army and Navy, and if we add those amounts together we have a round sum of 384 millions. But beside that, the war cost, I believe nearly 100 millions; consequently, the total expenditure incurred through that war amounts to 484 millions of money. And still the military and naval cormorants are not satisfied. Year by year they come down to the House, and I have heard the same words set to the same tune and from the same people three or four years in succession, with scarcely any variation in the remarks which they have addressed to the House whenever the Estimates have been under consideration. Last week the Government undertook to give another sop to Cerberus, and the House voted £600,000 as an addition to the expenditure on the Army, although the expenditure last year upon the two Services amounted to £30,492,533. Now we are asked to vote £21,000,000 more to be expended on the Navy. In 1874 the sum expended on the Navy was £10,063,351. In 1888 the sum expended was £12,325,357, or an increase during that interval of £2,262,006. The House has been profusely liberal in granting all the Supplies demanded by the Government for the fighting forces of the country. Last year, at the bidding of the Government, we voted £850,000 for fortifying our Australian Colonies, though nobody knew until Her Majesty's Government discovered it, that there was any danger to be apprehended in that quarter, but they told us there was a danger, and the faithful Commons voted the sum asked for. Then they came down a few weeks afterwards and asked for £2,600,000 more to fortify our coaling stations, and that sum also was granted. Then there was the £ 00,000 to which I have referred voted last week, and now, in addition, we are asked to vote 21 millions more for the purpose of placing the country in a state of complete defence. If, therefore, the sum now asked is granted the Government will within one year have committed the country to an increased expenditure upon the Army, the Navy, and Fortifications of £25,050,000. The Vote, I have little doubt, will be obtained; but if I felt absolutely certain of it I should still think it my duty to register a solemn protest against it. It matters to me very little whether the majority supporting Her Majesty's Government is 50 or 500, as I conceive it my duty, in the interest of the toiling millions of the country, to register my protest against this expenditure. If hon. Members opposite, and those who sit on this side and so readily acquiesce in the proposals of Her Majesty's Government to waste the resources of the country in this fashion, had to work for the money instead of spending it, I think they would approach the consideration of these demands in a very different spirit than they do now, and we should very likely find them with us in the Lobby protesting against this shameful waste of the nation's resources. No doubt the Government are hard up for a good cry. I do not say they have raised this scare to throw dust in the eyes of the people, as has been done in former times, so as to divert attention from domestic, social, and political reforms, although I notice that we have not had the cry of Imperial interests being jeopardized and the country being in danger trotted out on this occasion, I presume that is because those who have raised this scare have come to the conclusion that the cry has lost its force, and that the people are beginning to see through the fallacy of being frightened and led away by it. But another cry has been invented—I suppose it is considered a better cry—the demand is made, they say, to prevent danger to the food supplies of this country. The other day, last year, and the year before, when similar questions were being considered, hon. Members opposite posed, as they are now posing, as the champions of the best interests of the people, as so very regardful of the material wants of the nation and so fearful that the food supplies will be interfered with, that they ask for 21 millions to prevent somebody from stealing the food of the people in its transit across the ocean. This new-born zeal has to me a very suspicious appearance, especially as the Party opposite in the past did their best not to let in, but to keep out the food of the people and make it dear. That is so, if I have read the history of our country aright, and I know something from bitter personal experience in my young days how dear food was through the legislation of the Party opposite, and it is rather too late in the day for that Party, some of whom even now, if we may judge from speeches to their constituents, are hungering and thirsting for the opportunity of taxing the food of the people, to pose as their champions. They do not come forward boldly with their proposals, because they know the people would not stand them, and they are restrained by their wiser leaders. I attach little importance, then, to the statement that this money is to be expended to insure a proper and cheap supply of food for the people. I do not know that, when this subject has been debated, any representatives of large shipowning interests have regarded this proposal as absolutely necessary for the protection of our Commercial Marine; but I do recollect that two of the largest shipowners in the Kingdom—perhaps in the world—the hon. Members for Hull and Jarrow, rose in their places and ridiculed the proposals of the Government, although they own a large number of ships traversing the ocean in all parts of the world. If there are any two men qualified to express an opinion upon the danger to our Commercial Marine, they are these men who have millions of capital locked up in commercial ventures; but they cast ridicule and scorn on the proposal to expend this enormous sum on an increase of our Naval Force against imaginary dangers. Sir, I do not think anything more need be said to dispel the cry, or to prove how abortive is—this new-born zeal of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I think that ghost was fully laid by the hon. Members for Hull and Jarrow. My Amendment has reference to statements made last year by the Secretary for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty, and I will quote from their speeches to show what their views then were. But there is another Member of the Government whom I will call as a witness to prove my case. I presume the Secretary to the Admiralty does know something about his business and the condition of the British Fleet; for he is paid a good round sum by the nation to look after it. The Secretary to the Admiralty, addressing his constituents in April, 1887, said—

> "That a feeling of hopelessness, approaching sometimes to helplessness, came over him when he saw how matters were conducted at the Admiralty, and how money was expended, not to say wasted."

The hon. Gentleman also said that—

> "He took pride to himself and his colleagues that they had placed the Naval Estimates at the lowest figure compatible with safety; they showed a substantial reduction on the previous year's expenditure, and yet this reduced amount was sufficient to keep the Navy in an efficient state."

The hon. Gentleman had well considered his words; for though he was criticized severely for his utterances, he did not "climb down" from his position; but some time afterwards, speaking again, he went a great deal further. Addressing the London Chamber of Commerce on March 22, 1888, the hon. Gentleman said—

> "He feared that exaggerated statements had recently been made with regard to the Navy which might alarm the timid, but he believed that at no time was the Navy more ready or better organized for any work which it might be called upon to do than it was to-day."

The hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "If it were asked whether the British Navy was able to cope with any reasonable combination of Foreign Powers, it could be answered that England was more than equal in strength to two of the greatest nations in Europe—namely, France and Russia;"

and this statement the hon. Gentleman backed up by figures.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, Ormskirk): Has the hon. Member any objection to give the figures?

*MR. CREMER: I have not got them here; but if I am misquoting the hon. Gentleman he will presently have the opportunity to correct me. Perhaps he will also tell the Committee what has induced his present change of front—why, if our expenditure was sufficient at that time to provide the country with an efficient Fleet, it is not sufficient now; why, if our Fleet was equal to the naval strength of two of the greatest European Powers, it is insufficient now? It is amusing to notice the remarkable discrepancies in the statements of Ministers and experts as to the capabilities of the Army and Navy. It will be in the recollection of the Committee that last year we had a somewhat singular spectacle presented to us. Some of us were exceedingly gratified to find that the First Lord of the Admiralty displayed such an amount of common sense as to rebuke the utterances of Lord Wolseley, who tried to create a scare in the minds of our countrymen. It will be remembered that Lord Wolseley stated that 100,000 men could be landed on our shores with vessels of 150,000 tonnage. The noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) challenged this statement; and, after taking counsel with experts experienced in the transportation of troops, declared that vessels of 480,000 tonnage would be required—just a trifling difference of 320,000 tons between these two authorities. They differed also as to the amount of space required for the transportation of horses. The noble Lord said 2½ tons, while Lord Wolseley said 4 tons would be necessary. Lord Wolseley said 100,000 men could be landed on our shores in a day; the noble Lord (Hamilton) said it would take at least a week. Well, I think we are entitled to some clear and definite explanation before we allow ourselves to be frightened by statements so contradictory on the face of them. Both the statements of the First Lord and of Lord Wolseley were based on the assumption that there would be no opposing force. Well, considering we have been expending enormous sums of money on the Navy, that we have the standing Army, a Volunteer Army, and the Militia, it is an envious assumption that we should offer no kind of opposition to an invading force. If the noble Lord is right, that it would take a week to land 100,000 men on our shores if we did not oppose them, it is reasonable to suppose that with opposition it would take them something like a month, even if they succeeded then. Then we have, besides, the assurance of the First Lord of the Admiralty, to which I have referred, another statement from him to which we listened with pleasure. Personally, I felt thankful to the noble Lord for the attitude he took up in rebuking those connected with the two Services for their continued clamour for more men and more money. The noble Lord, for some reason I hope he will explain, has however entirely changed his attitude on the matter, and I shall await his explanation with some curiosity. I will refer briefly to the speech made by the noble Lord on July 5th, in which he expressed the opinion that Lord Wolseley's views were not to be sustained. The noble Lord, upholding his statement as to the landing of 100,000 men on our shores, said that, before expressing that view, he had consulted the experts at the Transport Department, so that the statement was based upon their authority as well as his own. Later on, in reply to the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Leigh Division of Lancashire, the noble Lord declared that the policy of the Admiralty was not to indulge in spasmodic shipbuilding, but to pursue a steady and continuous course. I do not know what interpretation the noble Lord now puts upon those words. I only take of them a plain, common-sense view. The proposal now before the Committee seems to me to be an entire departure from the declaration made by the noble Lord on the occasion to which I have referred. If all these statements were reliable, and Foreign Governments read them—and it is only fair to assume that they have been read by Foreign Governments—what will they say concerning the proposals that are now before the House? They will naturally argue, "If the British nation was in a state of security six or eight months ago, and now this extraordinary proposal is made for an expenditure of £21,000,000 to increase the Naval Forces of the country, the British Government, having already a sufficient force for defence, must intend to be aggressive." The result of such reasoning will be, that the Governments of Europe will become alarmed at the proposal now made to the country, and the evil will not diminish, but will be continued and aggravated. It is sometimes amusing to read what foreigners and foreign journals think and say of us. I saw the other day in the *Univers* a somewhat amusing account of the noble Lord's Naval Scheme. It said—

> "Every four or five years our excellent neighbours on the other side of the Channel are seized with a panic. They wake ore day with a notion that their island is badly defended, and that a more thorough protection is needed. Meetings are organized"—

almost exclusively attended by those belonging to the Services—

"at which generals and admirals make speeches, and the Government, be it Liberal or Conservative, readily yields to the pressure and brings out gigantic schemes that are never carried out in full. When a respectable number of millions have been spent, the English feel safe—that is, until another scare breaks out."

Some hon. Members in this House know how these scares are manufactured. I will not say they are got up by "panic mongers" as that is an offensive term, but words of equal force may be applied to those who promote them. The journal from which I have quoted concluded the article to which I am drawing attention with these words—

"England is suffering from such a scare at this moment, and a grand scheme is before Parliament to increase the number of ironclads. Somebody is safe to make a profit out of it."

The concluding sentence is one which I hope our countrymen will make a note of—that "somebody is sure to make a profit out of it." Of course they are. There are contractors always ready to clamour for an increase of the Army and Navy, and there is a host of officials who are always waiting for a crumb or two from the official table. No one but those in office can for a moment understand the pack of howling wolves behind the Government, hounding them on to spend money on the Army and Navy. The First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War have had to yield to the enormous pressure brought to bear behind and all round them. The Secretary for War, I remember, said, in a debate last year, he had listened to the speeches made by naval and military Members of the House, all advocating, from their different points of view, but in the kindest manner to himself, an enormous increase in the public expenditure of the country, and he rebuked Members behind him for their continuous and enormous demands for an increase of expenditure on the Army and Navy. On March 8th, last year, the right hon. Gentleman made another speech, in the course of which he said that good, honest work was being done to increase the military strength of the country, and efficiency was being gradually secured, without undue extravagance. He said—

"The only danger we have to apprehend is the fluctuation of public opinion, and there is no more certain way of producing that fluctuation than to give an exaggerated account of the money required, in order to put us in a satisfactory condition."

The right hon. Gentleman has now changed his opinion, and now sanctions this enormous expenditure of money which, six months ago, he protested against. In addition to the testimony I have quoted of Members of the Government, we have that of the Commander-in-Chief, who is supposed to know something about the safety of the country. On May 11th, last year, he repudiated there being any danger of the kind to which reference has been so frequently made; and the Prime Minister, on the same date, rebuked Lord Wolseley for inflaming the public mind, and went on to say—

"But what I do earnestly protest against is that panic-producing speeches should be made at public dinners by public men."

The noble Lord pointed out the large addition which had been made to the Army since June, 1884, and, with regard to the Navy, reminded the House of Lords that, whereas the amount expended on it in 1884 was £4,445,000, in 1888 it was £6,711,000. These figures he quoted to prove that there was no ground for alarm, and that, at any rate, nine months ago the country was perfectly safe. I think I am justified in saying that, if the Secretary to the Admiralty, the Secretary for War, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Prime Minister were satisfied nine or ten months ago that the country was in a perfect state of defence, and that our forces were then sufficient to defend us from invasion, that we are justified in demanding from Her Majesty's Government that they shall give us solid reasons for changing their opinions, and for the extraordinary proposals they are now making to extract from the pockets of the British taxpayer £21,000,000 to increase the Naval Forces of the country. I am willing to give Her Majesty's Government every credit for being honest in their intentions in this matter. My own conviction is that the proposals they have made are against their better judgment; that they have been simply overborne by the Representatives of the Services; that what the Secretary for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty said in this House last year they said believing their statements to be true, and being honestly desirous of continuing in the peaceful, economical path which they had marked out for themselves, but that since then the permanent officials and Representatives of the Services have been too strong for the Government. I do not wish to speak offensively; but I cannot help thinking that the Representatives of the Services have no business to be in this House at all. Perhaps the British public — the new electorate — may, at no distant day, have something to say with regard to the seemliness of men sitting in the House and practically voting their own salaries. It is clear to me, from the few years' experience I have had here, that so long as we have so large a contingent of the two Services here hounding on the Government against their better judgment, and practically masters of the situation, we shall have to wait in vain for economies in either of the Services. And, with regard to the permanent officials, I should be prepared to apply a very drastic remedy. I cannot help thinking that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War form two very good figure heads, but I very much doubt whether they are really much more than figure heads. It is the permanent officials who practically govern the country, and the only way to remedy this is to make a clean sweep of them, and to continue the sweeping process until the heads of the Departments are masters of the situation. I think I am warranted in repeating a statement made by a former Member of the House, who some years ago was connected with the Admiralty. The Government of that day made a serious effort in the direction of economy, and this Lord of the Admiralty earnestly joined the Government in the effort they were making to effect a retrenchment. Well, he declared on one occasion that he positively went into his office in bodily fear from the permanent officials because of the efforts he was making to effect a retrenchment. ["Name!"] There are Members in the House who know that statement is true. I do not know that the condition of things this gentleman found in the Department now obtains there, but I know the permanent officials offer such a sturdy opposition to the attempts of the Heads of Departments to bring about a retrenchment that, however desirous a Member of the Government may be to effect economy, in the end he becomes worn out in his efforts, and, at last, sits down and enjoys himself, as his predecessors have done before him, and allows the permanent officials to have their own way. No doubt the votes of the gentlemen connected with the Services are very important to the Government, and the influence of these persons, together with that brought to bear by the permanent officials, have, no doubt, weighed with the Government in the course they have adopted. I think I am justified in repeating a question which I have asked before, and which, if I have the honour to continue a Member of this House, I shall probably ask again. Last year when a proposal was made to increase the expenditure—which I cannot help thinking increases the danger—I asked a common sense question, which millions of people outside ask themselves—namely, "Where is the danger?" I want to know where the foe is to be found who is desirous of invading our shores? The only Member of this House, so far as I know, who has made an effort to discover and unearth the bogey is the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford), and he says it is General Boulanger. Well, I believe the noble Lord to be one of the really honest men on the other side of the House. I believe him to be mistaken, but I accredit him with every sincerity, and I am told that he regards himself as the best friend of peace to be found in this distinguished Assembly, although I take an opposite view of his policy. The noble Lord believes that General Boulanger will very likely undertake an invasion of this country.

Lord C. BERESFORD: No, no!

*Mr. CREMER: I am glad to hear the noble Lord is not frightened by General Boulanger; but if he fears no danger in that direction, perhaps he will be good enough to tell us where the danger really is? I thought the noble Lord was under the impression that there was some danger of General Boulanger organizing an expedition against us in consequence of our continued occupation of Egypt. Well, Sir, in regard to this continued occupation, I pointed out nearly three years ago that it was a source of danger to us, that it was a sore point, if not among the French people, at any rate amongst the governing classes of France, and I am glad to see that other people in England are coming round to the same common-sense view. If this feeling of soreness does exist, the best thing we can do to cure it, is to clear out of Egypt, not because we are threatened by General Boulanger, but because we have no business there. The sooner, therefore, we clear out of it the sooner shall we deprive General Boulanger of any plea for invading England—if he has any idea of invading us. In the autumn the General Election will take place in France, and we shall then know whether General Boulanger is to be in power or not. You cannot build new ships before next autumn, nor in less than three years, and if the danger be imminent we ought to have all the force you say is needed at our disposal immediately, while if the danger be remote I do not see the use of the present proposal. The French Marine Department are already proposing to increase the French Navy, on the ground that at present it is inferior to the English Navy; and a few weeks ago a Special Commission reported to the French Chamber of Deputies, recommending the building of more ironclads, the reason assigned being that we have done the same. They also recommended that a number of cruisers should be built, and that 20 more torpedo boats should be constructed, on the ground that we are also building cruisers and multiplying our torpedo boats. It is quite clear that every increase of our Naval Force leads to an increase of the Naval Forces on the other side of the Channel; it does not put an end to, but continues and magnifies, the evil. And in Germany the same state of things is going on. Only a fortnight ago it was said that 16 ocean-going torpedo boats were being built for the German Navy, to be armed with all the modern appliances, and to have a speed of 23 knots. If the proposals of the Government are agreed to, and this enormous sum of money is placed at their disposal, a large proportion of it—allowing for waste and extravagance such as we know of in the past—will be expended in the increase of our Fleet, and then we shall find that further proposals will will be made by France and Germany and Russia in the same direction, and when they have increased their forces because we have increased ours, another demand will in a few years be made upon us for further additions to our Navy. Lord Salisbury, speaking at the Lord Mayor's Dinner last November in regard to the armed condition of Europe, asked a very pertinent question, which I venture to repeat —namely, "When is this rivalry to end?" We are continually talking about being compelled to imitate the example of other nations, and I have no hesitation in doing so when the example is worth imitating; but I would ask why we do not set a good example ourselves? Why we do not make an effort to induce the nations abroad not to increase, but to reduce their armaments, and so diminish the danger? You may tell me they would not acquiesce in such a proposal. How do you know? You have never invited them. It is not worth an effort to see whether the time has not come when the public opinion of the world is not sufficiently strong to induce the Governments of Europe to join in a movement in this direction. I believe that if Her Majesty's Government were seriously to propose a Conference of the nations of the world, with the view of bringing about a mutual and simultaneous reduction of armaments, a shout of triumph would go up on the part of the people throughout the whole civilized world, and the Government who would undertake a task of that kind would cover themselves with everlasting glory. I hope Her Majesty's Government may see their way to take such a step. I am afraid that few Members of this House, particularly on the other side, have yet learned to understand that the old order of things has greatly changed, and that the democracy, not merely here, but throughout the world, or nearly so, has now entered into the possession of political power, and that that democracy is peaceful. The one man on the other side of the House who seems to me to understand the changed order of things, and the aspirations of the democracy, is the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington; and, if he continues in the spirit that has characterized his doings in regard to retrenchment and reform, I venture to say he will be assuring for himself the gratitude of the people and imperishable renown. I hope the Government will remember that monarchs and statesmen, still powerful—too powerful for mischief—have already had their power seriously diminished; that the power they wielded in the past has been and still is being more and more transferred to the people; and that the people are everywhere desirous of living in peace. I hope the Government will take in a kindly spirit the observations I have addressed to them; and will consider whether it is not worth while, instead of imitating a bad example, to set a good one, by asking the nations of the world, through their respective Governments, to join in a serious effort to reduce rather than to increase their armaments. Sir, I beg to move my Amendment.

Amendment proposed,—

"To leave out all the words after the first word "That," in order to add the words "having regard to the statements made during the last Session of Parliament by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War, as to the efficiency of the armaments of the Country for the purpose of Defence, and seeing that the Nation was assured, in the recent Speech from the Throne, that Her Majesty's relations with Foreign Powers, which were of the most peaceful character last year, remain in the same satisfactory condition, this Committee deems it expedient to authorise the expenditure asked for by the Government,"—(*Mr. Cremer*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I fully acknowledge that the observations of the hon. Member who has just sat down were made in a kindly spirit. No Member of the House can complain of the manner in which the hon. Member has brought this great and important question before the Committee, and I feel perfectly confident that the hon. Member has felt impelled to the course he has taken by an imperative sense of duty, and that he is impressed with the extreme importance of asking from the Government explanations to which he and the rest of the Committee are most fully entitled. I shall leave to my noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of the Admiralty the task of replying to the personal allusions which have been made to them, and to the more technical part of the question which refers to the Administration of the Admiralty and to the comparative force of the British Navy. But the hon. Member has alluded to some general considerations, with regard to which I think it right to offer a few words in reply, because, although he has not referred to me, he would be fully entitled to ask how, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, I could consent to the great burden which is placed upon the people by these proposals of the Government unless I was absolutely convinced of the extreme necessity of voting these sums. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has a heavy responsibility in this matter, which I do not wish for one moment to disclaim. The hon. Member, in his concluding observations, spoke of the change of attitude in Europe generally, since the accession of democracy to power. I wish to agree with the hon. Gentleman as far as I can and I will admit that the desire of most democracies, not of all, but certainly of the British democracy, is peace. But there is one other demand which the British democracy will make, and it is that besides peace there shall be absolute security. The hon. Member spoke of the toiling millions and of their interest in this question. But I speak with as sincere a conviction as that which animated him when I say that the toiling millions have as deep, if not a deeper, interest in the security of these islands and in the security of our commerce and of our Colonial Possessions as any other portion of Her Majesty's subjects. I would undertake to argue this question before any meeting of trade unionists, or before audiences composed exclusively of toiling artizans. I would put it to them what their fate would be if for three or four months only, or even for a shorter period, the importations and exportations of this country were seriously imperilled? We all remember the fate of Lancashire during the cotton famine.

The hon. Member and his friends will agree with me in this—that we are practically unanimous as to the necessity of being secure, and that, therefore, the only point on which this discussion can fairly turn is whether or not we are secure. We may be sure that any Parliament which, foreseeing the possibility of such a combination of circumstances as might place this country in peril, did not take measures adequate to provide against such a contingency would be justly held up to odium, obloquy, and the reproach of the nation. I admit that the democracy is for peace. What I say here is known to every statesman in Europe, and I affirm that no Government in this country — Conservative, Liberal, or Radical—would venture on a policy of aggression. There is no corner of the earth we covet or wish to take from any other Power. We have no aggressive object of any kind in view. Nothing could be more remote from the wish of every Member of the Administration than that by our proposals we should indicate to Europe that we have any different policy from that which has been pursued continuously by several successive Governments—namely, a policy of continued peace. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington said the other day that if it were flashed through Europe that we had embarked on an expenditure of £20,000,000 there would be an alarm throughout the Continent; but I am confident of the opposite, and that nothing can produce a more powerful influence in favour of peace than the knowledge that Great Britain is strong. No doubt the nations of the Continent are suffering under a terrible burden of armaments which the hon. Member properly denounced; but if there is one thing they look to as likely to exercise an influence for peace, it is a strong England. I say here with absolute conviction that no statesman in Europe holds the opposite view. They all hold that a strong England is an element of peace. I agree that if it could be done it would be a work worthy of any Government to bring nations into conference and induce them to disarm; but I am afraid that in these days it would be a Utopian attempt. But the moment when we should be most able to influence Europe in this direction would be the moment when it was universally acknowledged that by our strength we could exercise a very considerable influence upon Powers that might desire to go to war. No doubt in this country the democracy largely influences the policy of the Government, but I doubt whether in some of the most powerful States of Europe the masses have influence enough to affect the decisions of statesmen and Emperors. We have to look to circumstances with regard to which we are obliged to be extremely reticent, but which we cannot ignore. The hon. Member quoted the Marquess of Salisbury as asking—

> "How long is this to last? We may well ask ourselves how long is Europe to bear this strain?"

It is in this feeling that danger lies. The hon. Member may think that if the cloud which has so long hung over Europe were to burst, the interests of this country might be unaffected, and we might look on with unconcern; but a nation cannot always look on when it wishes, though it may do so if it has fleets and armies to prevent its hand being forced by others. If we survey the whole situation; if we look at the changes that have taken place; at the combinations of the forces of Europe that are possible; at the currents that are still running, I confess we do not see any such change as should make for peace, for permanent peace. There is no immediate anxiety; we are on the best of terms with other countries; but at the same time we have no right to depend upon the continuance of these cordial relations. We shall all agree that we must run no risks. It is true that for a long time we have been undisturbed, and, when it is asked where is attack to come from, it cannot be expected that a responsible Minister should in a time of peace point to any particular nation; but still a desperate nation might gain some considerable advantage for itself if it could attack, not necessarily these islands, but at all events the interests of Great Britain. We have no business to build upon any immunity we have enjoyed in the past, for changing circumstances may deprive us of that immunity. And when it is said that we have wasted money in the past, are we quite sure that we have not had an equivalent for our expenditure in the security we have enjoyed? Have we not escaped wars such as other countries have been engaged in, and has not our powerful Fleet been one cause of our immunity? In spite of the complaints of sailors, who are historically and habitually professional grumblers, has it not been due to our Fleet that security has been enjoyed by our coasts, our commerce, and our Colonies? But for our Fleet we might have offered temptations to adventurers and invited other nations to embark upon dangerous enterprizes. I hope the hon. Member will accept my assurance that our scheme it in no way due to the pressure of permanent officials at the Admiralty. The Government were themselves invited to look into the matter, to review all the circumstances of the case, to marshal our own forces, and to calculate the forces that might be brought against us. We were asked, as a Cabinet, to consider the matter, and the result is the proposal we submit. I admit that many of us, myself included, have been mainly influenced in the view that this expenditure ought to be undertaken by our opinions upon the position of foreign affairs. Hon. Members ask what changes there have taken place, but I trust hon. Members will not press us too much on the diplomatic side of the question. We do say that the general foreign situation, without being acute, is such that we should be blind to our duties if we did not take immediate measures to put ourselves in a proper state of defence. I hope hon. Members will agree with me when I say that we should run no risks, and that we ought not to rely upon the friendly disposition of other countries. If we study history, not only the history of the past, but contemporary history, I am sure we shall find the folly of building too much on any such amiable hope. Under the circumstances, the Government feel that it is their bounden duty to see that there is no possibility not only of successful invasion of our shores but of serious interruption to our commerce. If it is felt that the proposed addition to the Navy is not required, and that the forces of the country are already sufficient to effect these objects under all circumstances, then let the House reject our proposals, but do not reject them on Utopian considerations, or because you believe that this country has been so long unattacked that she will never be attacked again. Turning to the next point, I wish to remind the House of the fact that hon. Members on both sides are continually urging the Government to send out forces to all parts of the globe for the purpose of maintaining British interests. It is not on the Conservative side alone that these demands are made, for I remember in the debate on Samoa a very stout Radical, the hon. Member for St. Austell (Mr. W. M'Arthur), urged that the Government ought to have taken action which might have involved us in war with Germany. It has been said that there is no danger of invasion, but a course of action has repeatedly been urged upon the Government which might have led to war, and which would only have been likely not to lead to war on account of the knowledge that this country was sufficiently powerful to make war with her a dangerous game. It is not, however, in Samoa only, but elsewhere, that we come into contact with other European Powers. In our Colonies, for instance, we now come much more freely into contact with our Continental neighbours than used to be the case. That is so in Africa, in Asia, in India, and in Polynesia, in all of which collisions might occur which might very easily give rise to European conflicts. Fortunately, these things are managed with temper, and there is a disposition on the part of all European Powers to act with prudence and with friendliness. It is, however, found that the Powers whom we now meet in all parts of the globe are increasing their armaments, and that some countries have fleets which never had them before. It is, therefore, not only invasion that we have to consider, because there is an increase, I will not say of danger or risk, but at any rate of contact with our European neighbours in distant parts of the world which has made it necessary to augment our forces so as to uphold our interests in those distant regions. I think that it will be recognized that I have not argued this question in any narrow or aggressive spirit, or with any undue desire for the augmentation of the fighting forces of the country. We may be wrong in the view we take. [*Cheers and counter-cheers.*] Yes; and you may be wrong too. If we are wrong we may have deeply to regret that we have unnecessarily placed an extra burden of taxation upon the country; but if you are wrong you may be the means of imperilling interests compared with which all we now ask will be absolutely as nothing. In conclusion, I ask you to look at our proposals in a candid spirit, because, in our judgment, taking into consideration the position of Europe and of the world, if we wish for peace and the maintenance of British interests, it will be found indispensable to augment the forces of the Empire.

*MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh): I must protest against this proposal of the Government for a large increase in the Naval Estimates. In my opinion it is a great mistake. I fear that the Government have been influenced—like other Governments—by panic, and I believe this panic will end, like others, in extravagance and waste of public money. Had the Government directed their attention to the abuses, the incompetency and extravagance in the Army, the Navy, and in the Civil Service, and had rooted out those abuses, they would have rendered greater service to the State than by increasing the Estimates for war purposes. Panic and preparations for war tend to bring on war, which checks social progress, interferes disastrously with trade and commerce, piles up enormous debts, increases taxation, causes jealousy and ill-feeling between nations, and violates one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. No class is so interested in this question as the working class. About three-quarters of the Army and Navy are drawn from that class, and in time of war they suffer from depression in trade, from want of employment, from reduced wages, and increased taxation. Since I became a Member of this House, I have noticed that when any attempt has been made to reduce the expenditure of the Army, it has always been opposed by the Army officials, who proclaim that we have the worst armed and the worst equipped force in Europe, and the Admirals and Naval Officers tell us that the country is not sufficiently defended, and urge the Government to provide more forts, more warships, and more men. Although there has been a large increase in the naval expenditure during the last few years, still our shores are in danger, and the cry is for more war ships. Is the House on this subject to be guided in legislation by the conflicting statements of the Government and naval officials? Well, the hon. Member who introduced the Amendment gave some quotations from Members of the Government. Here is another. On July 10th, 1888 the hon. Member for Ormskirk (Secretary to the Admiralty), addressing a large meeting of the commercial community of Liverpool on the subject of the naval defences of the country, said that—

> "All were agreed that we required as a minimum a Navy sufficient in extent and power to overmatch the Naval Forces of any combination of hostile Foreign Powers that could be reasonably anticipated. Admiral Hornby, our foremost naval commander, had given details of the cruisers which, in his opinion we required, having regard to our Mercantile Navy. He suggested 486 cruisers of 16 knots and over, and said that as we had only 42 of this class we were 144 short. Now to build 144 new cruisers would cost £33,500,000, and adding to this £4,000,000, the cost of five new ironclads, which another distinguished naval officer said were required, our building programme beyond that which was now before the country would involve an expenditure of £37,500,000. No one now would advocate laying down vessels, except with a view to speedy completion, and as cruisers could be built in about two years, we should have to provide from £12,000,000 to £15,000.000 per annum to meet these demands, in addition to our present Naval Budget, in each of the next two or three years."

Well, the First Lord of the Admiralty proposes an increase of 70 war ships at the cost of £21,500,000, which he says is necessary for the protection of our shores and our commerce. Here are the views of the Secretary for War and some of our naval commanders as to the increase required in our Naval Forces;

on March 22nd, 1888, the Secretary to the Admiralty assured the country, in a speech addressed to the London Chamber of Commerce, that at no time was the Navy more ready or better organized for any work which it might be called upon to do than it was to-day. England was more than equal in strength to two of the greatest nations in Europe —France and Russia. Again, the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, speaking of our naval defences at a public meeting held in London on the 23rd of last month is reported to have said — "Admiral Symonds estimates an expenditure of £40,000,000, Admiral Hornby of £80,000,000, and Lord Alcester of £30,000,000, to put the country in a state of proper defence." Another military commander, speaking upon our naval defences, said—"What we seem to require for the Navy is an organized reserve both of ships and of men, corresponding to the system of military reserves adopted on the Continent." That would seem to be the object of the Government in proposing an addition of 70 warships. We are at peace with Europe, and we are told that the best way to secure and protect our commerce is to be prepared for war. Well, I think we cannot too often expose that unsound and fallacious argument. What are the facts? Have not the nations of Europe been prepared for war for more than 50 years? And at the present time the Armies and Reserves — excluding the Navies—amount to over 20,000,000 men. And what has been the result? Has there been peace in Europe? During the 20 years ending 1873 there have been 5 or 6 of the most destructive wars on record. That has been the result of the nations of Europe being prepared for war to secure peace by increasing year by year their Armies and Navies. Well, Sir, we have no means of ascertaining the losses of trade and commerce sustained by the nations of Europe by those wars, but they must have been enormous. But the number of lives sacrificed in those wars was 1,140,000, and the cost £1,013,000,000. Are there no better means for the safety of our commerce than providing more warships? With the vast amount of commerce between this country and America, does anybody believe that the two countries could be involved in war? Let me give the opinion of an eminent American statesman on this point. The Hon. William Elliott, speaking of the cotton trade some time ago, concluded with these words—

> "Few more acceptable contributions, it seems to me, can be made from one country to another, few stronger ties of interest can be interposed, few better securities for continued good-will can be devised, than those which America offers to Europe, in the mutual benefits of the cotton trade. It must be ever influential in preserving that state which, while it can be preserved with honour, is the true glory and interest of every nation to maintain. For it is just to believe that God has made the earth ample enough for the support of all His intelligent creatures; that we are under no obligation to destroy each other for self preservation; and that is the true mission of man—irrespective of the narrow and often arbitrary divisions of States and Nations—to contribute to the happiness of his fellow-being by throwing in his way all the inestimable blessings of civilization."

I hope this House will not allow the Government to embark in this reckless and unnecessary expenditure to which they intend to bind future Governments. Well, I will just allude before I sit down to the Treaty of Paris. At the close of the Crimean War the Congress of Paris assembled—in 1856—and the Plenipotentiaries recognized the expediency of submitting international differences to arbitration, and of making changes in the public law of Europe as to the right of maritime capture, and to make trade as free in time of war as it is in time of peace; and I understand the Treaty of Paris is still binding. Are we bound by that Treaty? If not, why not?

*SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): With regard to the remark of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Democracy desires peace and also desires security, I would point out the Democracy desires peace by means of the efficient expenditure of public money. I would not discourage the creation of a strong Navy, but I certainly would not encourage the waste of public money under the pretext of making our Navy strong. Both the Resolution and the Amendment, standing as they do at opposite extremes before the Committee, show the necessity of a closer examination into the nature of the proposals of the Government. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer makes this even more requisite, as the whole of his observations appeared to me to be directed by the idea that we are called upon to enter upon an enormous expenditure of public money. On the other hand, the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Shoreditch would have the effect, if carried, of practically closing the dockyards, and putting an end to shipbuilding after another million has been expended. I think the fact of the existence of these extreme views indicates the necessity of some one taking a little trouble to make the actual situation a little clearer. I can understand why the Government should propose a scheme of shipbuilding and of finance which would have the effect of enabling them to draw on the Consolidated Fund for the cost of ships to be built by contract. I know from my own experience that great difficulty arises towards the end of the financial year in connection with the contracts for shipbuilding, because the Government know that if the contractors are behind with their work, the money not earned will have to be re-voted. I can, therefore, understand that the Government should desire to relieve themselves of this difficulty. Nevertheless, taking all the circumstances into account, I cannot support the proposition they make on the subject. The effect of that proposition, if agreed to, will be to throw great impediments in the way of getting ships built. Under the present system, every one concerned uses his best endeavours to get the money earned, and if the existing incentives to action are withdrawn, I am afraid that ships would not be built so readily by contract in the future. But I have a far greater objection to the proposal. I am at a loss to understand on what grounds the Admiralty, in a particular and limited case, is to be exempted from conditions which, if generally set aside, would produce the greatest financial disorder throughout the public service. I cannot think that this scheme has been well considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I go so far as to say that the principle involved in the Resolution unsettles one of the most important conditions of our national finance. Hitherto we have been able to have a strict debtor and creditor account kept by the State; but if we are to say to a Department, "Here is money for you to spend as you please for five years; the House of Commons will not inquire whether you have spent it or not, whether the contractors have kept time or not; all that we shall ask at the end of five years is—Have you done what we proposed?"—we shall thereby give our assent to a system which, if it be repeated and become general, will unhinge some of the most important elements of our control over finance. I know it is the fashion in official quarters to sneer and laugh at the control of the House of Commons; but the influence of the House, however it may fail on certain occasions, does assert itself in a general manner, and exercise a wholesome restraint upon the action of Government Departments. And now we are told that we are this Session to vote £10,000,000 sterling for the construction of ships by contract, and we shall find them finished at the end of five years; but in the interval the House is to have nothing to do with them, and is not even to have a knowledge of the manner in which that large sum of public money is being expended. That appears to be a most extraordinary proposal. I am not now offering any opposition to the scheme of shipbuilding, but merely referring to the financial method of dealing with the subject. As to the ships to be built in Her Majesty's dockyards we are to be called upon to vote the money annually. If we pass this Resolution and a Bill founded upon it becomes an Act, the House will be binding itself, and calling in the assistance of the House of Lords to bind us, to lay down two or three years hence ships and to vote money for them, whatever we may think of the ships, of the necessity for them, or of the wisdom of building them. And we shall be asked to go through the farce of voting the sums necessary to carry out the obligation we have so indiscreetly and blindly undertaken. He could hardly imagine that so absurd a state of things could be seriously contemplated by the Admiralty; but if they could explain the matter to the satisfaction of the House it would be an immense relief to my mind. I hope these various points will receive the consideration of the Government. I come now to the question of the programme and the figures it involves. As far as I can see the figures are in accordance with the Parliamentary Paper sent round by the Parliamentary Secretary, and with the answers given by the First Lord to the questions addressed to him in this House. What the Government have done in this matter is to pose before the country as the originators of a great scheme for adding largely to the numbers of Her Majesty's ships. Now the total, the startling total named by the First Lord of the Admiralty, as about to be expended in the construction of 70 additional ships was £21,500,000, including the cost of armaments. All the figures I am going to give are taken from the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton). The aggregate expenditure was divided by the noble Lord into two parts—first, an expenditure of £16,150,000 upon new ships and engines; and, secondly, an expenditure of £5,350,000 upon armaments. The latter figure I will leave on one side for the present. The amount of £16,150,000 for new ships and engines was divided into two portions—namely, £8,650,000 to be expended in the dockyards, and £7,500,000 to be expended by contract. In response to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, the First Lord of the Admiralty pointed out that in addition to this expenditure, which is purely expenditure under the programme, there are to be found other sums. In the first place there is a sum of money requisite for the completion of the ships already in progress; and I find that the amount required for this purpose was, for 1889-90, £1,285,000, and for 1890-91, £250,000, making a total of £1,535,000 required for the completion of ships in progress, in addition to the amount spoken of as the new programme. Taking the amount of £16,150,000 allotted to new ships under the programme, and the £1,535,000 for the completion of ships, the aggregate amounts to £17,685,000. Then arises the question as to the period over which this expenditure is to be extended. In his speech the noble Lord repeatedly observed that four years and a-half was to be the period for carrying out the programme. But I noticed that the noble Lord spoke of that four and a-half years as being a period to be estimated from the laying down of the first ship. He also said:—

> "We propose to put them (the whole of the ships) in an Act of Parliament, in two Schedules, enacting that they shall be completed within the period I have mentioned—namely by April 1894."

I think therefore I shall be justified in taking the period contemplated for the full completion of the new programme as five years. The average expenditure in the five years would be £3,537,000 per annum for the construction of new ships without armaments, including those now upon the stocks. In order to show the magnitude of the proposed programme I will take the expenditure of the Government during the last five years and compare it with the proposed expenditure of the ensuing five years. The annual expenditure during the last five years upon ships built in the dockyards and by contract, I believe I am right in saying, excluding armaments, instead of £3,537,000 as it is to be, has been £3,303,000, or a difference of only £234,000. At the end of the ensuing five years the state of the Navy, as compared with what it would have been if the ordinary expenditure of the last five years had been continued through the next five, will be this:—We shall have added about £1,250,000 in value to the Navy, or, in other words, the price of about one ironclad and one cruiser. I commend this fact to the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford), who at some recent election meetings has spoken about the magnitude of the programme.

LORD C. BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.): No; read the Papers.

*SIR E. J. REED: Well, at all events, in five years, if we live as long, there will have been added to the Navy one line-of-battle-ship and one cruiser over and above what would have been added if we had had no new programme and no great display on the part of the Government. It is fair that I should say I have not taken into account the amount that will be required to fill the Dockyards up to the average level when the new programme is working itself out. I was rather reluctant to accept the £3,000,000, which the Secretary to the Admiralty (Mr. Forwood) mentioned the other night as the sum that would be required for the purpose, because I fancied that the First Lord of the Admiralty (Lord G. Hamilton) had, in his speech on March 7th, given us some encouragement to hope that there would be a reduction of expenditure in consequence of the production of this great programme. This passage occurred in the noble Lord's speech—

> "There will be, as the Committee will recollect, a decrease in the Shipbuilding Vote four or five years hence, if the House were satisfied with the strength at which the Navy was maintained."

I do not think it would serve any useful purpose to deny to the Admiralty the right to retreat from their position to the small extent it has been necessary for them to do in asking us to accept this £3,000,000. I have tested the matter by taking the period as four and a-half years, and I have obtained certain figures, but they differ so little from those obtained by taking the Admiralty's own *modus operandi* that I need not trouble the Committee with them. Using as a basis the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, I find that in 1892-93, if we keep the expenditure up to the full amount given in the text of the programme, an outlay of £910,000 will be required on new ships, whilst in the following year the amount will be £1,820,000, making a total of £2,730,000. Taking the most favourable view that any fair-minded person can possibly take, we find ourselves in this position. Adding together the £17,685,000 to this £2,730,000, we get a total of £20,415,000, and dividing this by five we find that the annual expenditure for the next five years will be £4,083,000. This is as I have said upon ships with their expenses, exclusive of armament charges. If I am wrong, there are competent Gentlemen opposite to correct me; but the best result I can draw from the figures is that, taking the most enlarged and liberal view of their programme, the Admiralty propose to spend three quarters of a million a year extra on shipbuilding, or, in the aggregate, about £3,900,000, which would give the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone an addition of four line-of-battle ships, and if he got these he would get no extra cruisers over and above what would have been built under the normal shipbuilding programme. I ask whether it is wise, whether it is judicious, of the House to sanction this Resolution and the Bill founded upon it—to go through these elaborate and, probably, unconstitutional operations, for the simple purpose of adding £3,900,000 to the Navy in five years? The simple addition, so far as ships and engines are concerned, of three-quarters of a million to the annual Estimates would accomplish all the objects which the Government have in view, with one single exception—namely, that under their scheme they might possibly quicken the getting of them; they might order all the ships to be built by contract at once. But there is this set-off, that they may also retard the building of the vessel; so, on the whole, we gain nothing whatever from all this elaborate and questionable machinery. Now, if I may not be suspected of harping too much on a favourite string of mine, I would say a few words on the ships proposed to be built. I see abroad some kind of a desire on the part of certain persons to take their revenge upon me for my persistent and systematic attempts to see that safe ships are built for the Navy, by trying to find out mistakes committed during the time I was at the Admiralty. It is not a subject to dwell upon, but I may say with confidence this—that no attempt of that kind will succeed in the slightest degree with me. You will prove nothing if you prove that I have made mistakes; and I am not so certain but that, if I had made grave mistakes, that would the more justify me in endeavouring to prevent a repetition of those mistakes. I can understand perfectly well that a man should be annoyed with anybody who severely criticizes his proposals; but let me put this to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen—my complaints and my criticisms of Her Majesty's ships and the building of them have been never of a narrow, small, and carping character. I have never criticized as to details; I have never complained of a ship being a little too big, or a little too costly, or a little too lofty, or anything of that kind. My complaint, and my only complaint, and which will continue to be my complaint as long as I am alive and have the means of influencing the matter, is that the British sailor should not be sent into action in a vessel which, under cover of being an armoured ship, will founder beneath him when attacked by the light guns of the enemy. The British sailor is entitled, when we send him into battle, to have beneath him a platform as secure as modern knowledge and skill can make it. Is it not an anomalous thing—is it not a very strange thing in the history of this naval country that Admiralty officers should have been for 10 years past, without a single exception—I am sorry to see the noble Lord now repudiates the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*—that Admiralty officers should have been contending for what I call danger, and I, for what I, on the other hand, consider safety? I think anyone interested in construction ought to ask himself why it is that we are to be driven to the construction of vessels, the safety of which, for battle purposes, is called into question by competent persons. I have sat in this House for 15 years, and said, I dare say, many unpleasant things; but, at least, I think I may lay claim to impartiality, and I have had to make great personal sacrifices to call in question the construction of vessels. Now the First Lord does not propose to construct one single ship of the cruiser class, of all he proposes to build, with an armour belt to protect her. Now this means that for the sake of a small percentage in the cost, and that but a very small percentage, while you are going to enlarge the size of your battle ships without rhyme or reason—while you are lavish there with no good cause—for the sake of a trifling gain you deny to all the cruisers of the British Navy a belt of armour. You put all the armour in a deck, and you turn it down, leaving her side exposed to the enemy. Without engaging in a technical discussion, I may point out this—that if you injure a ship above the waterline, you may repair her while at sea with the resources you have on board, and keep her at service; but if you make her so weak and tender that she is liable to injury between wind and water, you cannot repair her at sea. You must take her away from her station, and send her, perhaps, thousands of miles before she can be repaired. Yet for some reason, inscrutable to me, this wretched system of denying to the cruisers the protecting belt is pursued, simply for the sake of a small percentage of economy in the cost. I do not know what explanation may be forthcoming from the First Lord, but I shall be interested to see if he can suggest any other reason. Observe, these ships are all called protected; but, in fact, they are not protected at all. They have no more armour protection upon them than this book. But my principal object to-night was to make clear what careful reading brings to my knowledge of the programme of the Government. I have said and written, perhaps, some strong words, perhaps too strong sometimes; but I hope the noble Lord will rise above all personal feelings, and look only to the welfare of the Naval Service of the nation. I cannot understand—I cannot believe—that there is any good reason why we should have departed, in the proposed battle ships, from the type last laid down. I believe the First Lord of the Admiralty, and it is quite likely that other Members of the Board too, do not know what these ships are, or how they differ from the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar*. The noble Lord said, on March 7th, that the disposition of armour in the new *Admiral* class resembled that of the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*, but really there is no resemblance at all between the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar* and these new ships. The *Nile* and the *Trafalgar* are of the *Dreadnought* type, and their characteristic feature is that they are armoured throughout, all the central parts rising from the water to the upper deck. In the *Admiral* class this armour is taken away, and all that is left is a narrow ship of armour, hardly to be seen when the vessel is half-a mile off—just enough to swear by, if I may use that expression. In the new battle ships, that great wall of armour that fixes the type of the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*, is absolutely gone, and we have gone back to the narrow strip. As long as this is continued, I must maintain my criticism and my strenuous opposition to such construction; but go back to the *Trafalgar* type and all my criticisms will cease. If, in the exigencies of battle one of these proposed vessels is inclined four degrees the whole value of the armour is gone, and she becomes practically an unarmoured vessel. The *Nile* and *Trafalgar* could be inclined 17 degrees before this would occur. To show the perversity with which the Government proceed in this matter, I may refer to the terrible feeling that exists throughout the Navy about this *Admiral* class, and if the First Lord ventures to contradict that statement, I could undertake to put into affidavits and to produce writings from many of the Lords who have been connected with the Admiralty, condemning these ships in most unqualified terms. When the First Lord and his colleagues went to the Admiralty, and when they produced the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar*, there was great satisfaction throughout all the Naval Service, and we thought there was no fear that we should revert to the doubtful type again. I approved the type, in so far as their defensive armour is concerned, and repeatedly defended these two ships in this House. It appears to me that to change from them is pure, unmitigated, injudicious, obstinate perversity, and I hope the House will agree to submit the proposal to a tribunal where the subject can be threshed out thoroughly, before we are held to the expenditure of eight millions upon ships with which certainly I can feel no satisfaction. In the *Times* to-day there is a letter from a gallant admiral, and he says many things of which I do not in the least know the meaning—they are quite beyond my knowledge; but after criticizing me somewhat, he declares that if he had the power, he would build ships of a totally different character, and he says that a great many officers in the Service agree with him. Will that letter have any effect on the noble Lord? Hitherto, I have evinced no disposition to attack the policy of the Government; I did not make a single complaint against the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar*. My only desire is to see the money expended in the preservation of our naval strength wisely and properly expended, to the satisfaction of those best able to form a judgment upon our requirements.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD: I beg to move, Sir, that you now report Progress.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The noble Lord is aware we are rather pressed for time. Better go on until 12 o'clock.

[Several hon. Members: No, no!]

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Lord Charles Beresford*,)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate. There was no expectation this Bill would be reached to-night. My hon. Friend the Member for Longford desires to raise some questions as to the conduct and employment of soldiers in Ireland, and I wish to refer to the action of an officer who disturbed the congregation in Clonmel Church during Divine Service.

***MR. SPEAKER**: The right hon. Member would not be in order in making a Motion to delay this—what is the usual Army Bill, to continue the Army Regulations for another year—for the purpose of alluding to events of the past year. They would not arise on the Bill, which is to continue Regulations for the coming year.

MR. SEXTON: My observations would undoubtedly come within the Bill, and I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER**: I hope the right hon. Member will not press the Motion, which will have the effect of seriously delaying the Bill, in order to raise the particular points referred to. Surely the right hon. Gentleman would not oppose the Second Reading?

MR. SEXTON: I must persist in the Motion.

Question put, "That the Debate be now adjourned."

The House divided:—Ayes 66; Noes 164.

Original Question again proposed.

MR. SEXTON: On the question of order, Sir, if I correctly appreciated the force of your ruling, you said my remarks should be relevant to the Regulations for the discipline of the Army. My remarks would be directed to the disturbance of a congregation at Divine Service by the conduct of soldiers, and my desire is to obtain an assurance that the Regulations should be so altered as to prevent a recurrence of such disturbance.

***MR. SPEAKER**: A discussion on the action of a particular officer of the Army would not be relevant to the Bill; but if the hon. Gentleman wishes to alter any general Regulation, that could be discussed in Committee.

MR. SEXTON: I give notice that in Committee on the Bill I will move an Amendment to the effect that no order should be given in church which would tend to disturb the peace of the congregation.

Original Questions put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT (1847) AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 65).

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Amendment proposed,

At end to add the following sub-section:—"(2.) This Act shall be deemed to be incorporated with 'The Public Health Act, 1875,' by Section one hundred and seventy-one of that Act."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Clause 3.

Amendment proposed—(*Mr. Picton.*)

Page 1, line 17, leave out "gross or."

Page 2, at end of Clause, add—

"Any omnibus starting from outside the prescribed distance, and bringing passengers within the prescribed distance, but not standing or plying for hire within the prescribed distance."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Clause 4.

Amendments proposed—(*Mr. Picton.*)

Page 2, line 9, leave out "forty-two," and insert "fifty-two."

Page 2, at end, add the following sub-section:—

"(4.) For the purposes of sections fifty-four, fifty-eight, and sixty-six of the principal Act, the fare, according to the statement of fares exhibited on any omnibus, shall be deemed to be the fare allowed by the principal Act or authorized by any bye-law under that Act."

Amendments agreed to.

Clause, as amended, added to the Bill.

Clauses 5 and 6 and Preamble agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered on Thursday.

BRIBERY (PUBLIC BODIES PREVENTION) BILL (No. 158).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I do not want to stop the progress of this Bill, for I believe there is a general wish that it should pass. The first thing that strikes me on reading the Bill through is the great distinction that is drawn between public bodies and private bodies, and I do not quite understand why there should be this distinction. Private bodies are equally open with public bodies to the evils of bribery and corruption, and, I should have thought, equally able to defend themselves. I am inclined to fear that their being fenced round with legislation will tend to the relaxation of vigilance and the decrease of integrity. Further, I submit with all deference that the general principle of legislation is directed against crime wherever it can be found, and not merely under particular circumstances. With one or two exceptions, perhaps, that is the general rule, which this Bill departs from. That principle has been violated in this Bill, and I do not think it ought to pass without some slight discussion. I say nothing of the penalties attached—I only now submit these two objections.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): The hon. and gallant Member speaks of objection to the Bill, but I suppose he does not seriously mean that, because it would be destructive of the measure at once. I do not wish to oppose the Bill on the present occasion. I believe it is the first bantling of the noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill), and I have not the slightest wish to strangle it in its birth, and that the noble Lord should lose any advantage he may derive from the passing of the measure. But I would just like to mention two public bodies that the noble Lord has not taken into account, and which, perhaps, on subsequent consideration, he may see his way to include. I refer to the Primrose League and Her Majesty's Government.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire Northwich): It would be well, I think, if the Bill were extended to private Corporations. A considerable amount of dishonesty arises out of the custom of giving tips to obtain business, and if we could declare it a crime to take a bribe in order to give orders, I believe it would have a beneficial, wholesome effect on the commercial habits of the country.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): I fear that if the scope of the Bill were extended no progress would be made with any legislation on the subject. There is an essential difference between a private body and a public one. A private body has a direct interest in looking after its own servants, but in the case of a public body what is everybody's business is nobody's business, and thus public bodies become engaged in transactions which the members in their private capacity would not contemplate for a moment. At some time, perhaps, Parliament may take into consideration the mischievous practice of giving commissions and tips of all kinds; but it is too much to attempt now. The Bill is the direct offspring of the Commission to inquire into the Metropolitan Board. The Commission found that persons had been guilty of corrupt practices for which they could not be got hold of in any way. I may mention that I have received a large number of letters from Corporations and persons connected with public bodies approving the Bill, and these letters throw a lurid light upon the prevalence of practices which this Bill may do something to prevent in the future.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

PARTNERSHIP BILL (No. 151).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): In relation to this Bill I notice a Motion on the Paper to refer it after Second Reading to a Standing Committee. May I ask what course the Government have decided to adopt in reference to sending Bills to a Standing Committee? It was, I believe, intended, when Standing Committees were first set up in 1882, that they should be reserved for Government Bills, so that Members who sacrificed their time to these Committees might know that they were dealing with measures for which the Government was responsible.

MR. GOSCHEN: I cannot give the right hon. Gentleman a conclusive answer, but I will communicate with my right hon. Friend the First Lord.

Second Reading deferred till Thursday.

MOTIONS.

——o——

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS).

Motion made and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be re-appointed to inquire into the laws existing in the United States and elsewhere on the subject of the Immigration of destitute Aliens, and as to the extent and effect of such Immigration into the United Kingdom, and to report whether it is desirable to impose any, and, if so, what restrictions on such Immigration."—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I am sorry to interpose, but I must make a claim to have another Scotch Member appointed.

*MR. SPEAKER: That question arises on the nomination.

Question put, and agreed to.

Question proposed, "That the Committee do consist of 19 Members."

MR. ESSLEMONT: I must now protest against the Committee being nominated until the claim of the Scotch Members is considered.

THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The Committee is constituted in the same way as last year, and there was then no question, and I did not understand from my hon. Friend who in these matters represents hon. Members on the other side, that there was any objection. There was a general consensus of opinion in favour of the names I have given notice of. Still, if an hon. Member wishes his name to be withdrawn the wishes of the hon. Member might be met.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I have heard smooth words before on various occasions; but still Scotland is not fairly represented. ["Order!"]

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I appeal to my hon. Friend not to press his objection.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I must press it.

The naming of the Committee consequently stood adjourned.

DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONERS (IRELAND).

MR. SEXTON: I beg to move for Copy of all Official Correspondence relating to the appointment of Divisional Commissioners in Ireland to be Justices of the Peace for certain counties; and Return showing the Precedents, if any, for the appointment of salaried Officials by the Lord Chancellor of Ireland to the Commission of Justice of the Peace; the Counties for which each Divisional Commissioner has been appointed as Justice; the amount payable by each Commissioner on his appointment as Justice; the Date of Payment; the Date on which each Commissioner was appointed a Justice for each County; and the Date on which he ceased to be a Resident Magistrate.

MR. BYRON REED: I object.

MR. GOSCHEN: I was going to ask the hon. Member to postpone the resolution, as we cannot give him the Return in the exact form he asks; we must have further consultation.

MR. SEXTON: This is the second time the Motion has been postponed. The Irish Office has never had the courtesy to make any communication to me on the subject, although the Chief Secretary promised last Friday to consider in what form the Return should be given. I do not think it is a businesslike proceeding. At the request of the right hon. Gentleman, however, I will postpone the Motion till Thursday.

Motion postponed till Thursday.

SUBMARINE TELEGRAPH CABLES.

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum explanatory of the relations entered into with Germany, Holland, Belgium, and France, as regards the working of the Submarine Telegraph Cables to those Countries."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 86.]

House adjourned at half after Twelve o'clock

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 7.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [April 3.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 26th March, 1889.

ARBITRATION (NO. 2) BILL. (NO. 31.)

A Bill to consolidate the law relating to arbitration — Was presented by The Lord Bramwell; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Question proposed, "That Standing Order No. XXXV. be dispensed with for this day's Sitting."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

Lord DENMAN: My Lords, I beg to ask if the suspension of the Standing Orders applies to every Bill on the Minutes of this day. On the 4th August, 1879, they were suspended for the hurried passage of a Bill for limited liability to Banking Companies—no deliberation was allowed to the Bill by the noble Viscount (Viscount Cranbrook), then Secretary of State for India—and it received the Royal Assent the day after it had been read a second time. I venture to think that this House ought to reject a Money Bill if it has been passed by the *cloture.* On the 10th of July, 1884, an extraordinary instance of an attempt at undue haste occurred; there were three Bills on the paper—the Bill appointing a Secretary of State for Scotland—a Bill for Women's Suffrage—and a Bill to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and the noble Earl (Earl Cairns) wrote to me to postpone the Women's Suffrage Bill, as the House would wish to divide before dinner on the Bill which was next on the minutes to the Women's Suffrage Bill. I did not consent, but all business was suspended soon after. My Lords, with great difficulty I have established the fact that an Order for a Bill to be read on a certain day is, if the House be sitting, a real Order, to be carried out at the end of so many lunar months, and ever after upon Notice, if agreed to by the House. On the 18th March two Bills were postponed for six months. I wished the Order to be changed to two months, and handed a Notice to the Clerk of this House. He refused to issue it, but I believe it is not the duty of the Clerk to reject Notices, but to leave it to the House to alter or reject them. I have twice beaten two different Clerks as to Notices—and maintain my opinion. I would rather sit every day in the week and see Bills considerately carried than agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders, which has been too often resorted to.

Question put, and agreed to.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—Agreed to.

Bill read 2ª accordingly.

Moved, "That the Earl Beauchamp do take the Chair in the Committee." —(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)—Agreed to.

House in Committee.

Bill reported without Amendment; read 3ª, and passed.

LICENSING ACT, 1872, AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 25.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

***Earl BEAUCHAMP**: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill

I shall not trespass very long upon your Lordships, because the object of the measure is very clearly stated in the Bill itself. I may, in the first place, state that I am not actuated, as some seem to think, by any hostility to the licensed victuallers. They are a most respectable body of men, and men for whom I entertain the greatest possible respect. Some years ago I had the honour of carrying through your Lordships' House a measure interesting to them, and I well know how respectable a body of men they are. The Bill is presented in the interests of the large body of persons who are travellers by railway in this country. No one can deny that railway companies, in issuing tickets to their passengers, are bound to provide proper and reasonable accommodation beyond the undertaking to convey persons to their destination, and it seems to me that there ought to be no want of adequate shelter against wind and storm, and the inclemencies of the weather. I have no doubt when railways were first established waiting rooms were provided at every station, but by degrees they have been gradually diverted from their original purpose and have become refreshment rooms, which are not accessible to the ordinary passengers, in the way they enjoyed them before the change. As I have said, I am not actuated by any hostility to the licensed victuallers or to the refreshment rooms themselves. I will go farther, and say that I am the last person to initiate any legislation for the purpose of unduly controlling or limiting the enjoyments or amusements of the people of this country; but railway passengers are entitled to much better accommodation and protection against wind and weather than that which they obtain at a refreshment room. It cannot be denied that the accommodation is not always forthcoming. My Lords, the object of the Bill is to provide that from and after a certain date, the Justices, in granting or renewing licences for refreshment rooms at railway stations, shall not do so unless they are satisfied that proper accommodation is provided for passengers other than the accommodation for the sale of liquors. My Lords, that is the whole proposition involved in the Bill, and I think your Lordships will say it is a very simple one. Your Lordships may object to the machinery for carrying out the provisions of the Bill; you may think that the penalties are too severe, or that the time for reverting to the old state of things is too short; you may think that limitations might be imposed so as to exclude more or less the Metropolitan area; but all those are matters of detail which do not affect the principle of the Bill. There is no doubt that a licence for the sale of intoxicating liquors is a very valuable property to those to whom it is granted; and, therefore, I do not think it at all unreasonable or too much to ask that those to whom are granted should be called upon to take care that the licences should be used properly, and not to the annoyance of other persons. In many cases passengers are compelled to wait for long periods at railway stations; sometimes they arrive at a station too soon, sometimes too late, and at junctions the arrangements are such that passengers are often kept waiting a considerable time; and I think it certainly is a most serious grievance that they should, under those circumstances, be put to the great inconvenience and annoyance of waiting in a room where refreshments—including intoxicating liquors—are being served, and where, perhaps, all the company are not in that state of tranquillity or sobriety which might be desirable. Parliament has enacted conditions preliminary to the granting of licences, such as that the premises shall be of a certain value, that certain accommodation should be provided, and regulating the sale of liquors, and so forth; and I do not see why similar or the necessary provisoes should not be insisted on with regard to railway refreshment rooms, so that they should not be used to the inconvenience of the great body of railway passengers. Circulars have been sent out to the public, and it has been said that there is no widespread demand for this measure. My Lords, I have always wondered at the absence of complaints and at the apathy of the public; but of railway passengers it may be said that "sufferance is the badge of all their tribe," and the absence of complaint is probably due to the want of any kind of organization among railway passengers. Railway passengers are not an organized body, and it is obvious they cannot be, But there is no reason whatever why Parliament should not take the circumstances of the case into their consideration, and relieve railway passengers of the inconvenience and annoyance to which they are exposed by the sale of intoxicating liquors in the only places of accommodation for waiting at railway stations. My Lords, we have been told that this grievance does not exist, and that waiting rooms are always provided, but such a statement could only be made by those who are not acquainted with the facts of the case. The cases of which I complain are either many or few. If they are many, I suppose that it will be conceded that the grievance requires a remedy; but if they are few, where is the hardship in requiring the few to bring up the level of the accommodation to the adequate arrangements of the many? My Lords, I do not think it necessary to encumber my case by further reference to the argument which is addressed to the invariable providing of waiting accommodation for railway passengers. I do not know whether it would be possible to obtain from the railway companies particulars with regard to the waiting accommodation they provide for the public, and also particulars as to the licences granted for those premises. It is a matter upon which it is hardly possible to get statistics which would be at all reliable. But when all is said and done, I think it is a matter which, in the interest of the public requires Parliamentary interference. My Lords, the principal objection to the Bill appears to be that it would include the stations in the Metropolitan area, but it is a matter for your Lordships to consider, and I should not withdraw the Bill if the Metropolitan area was excluded. It has been urged that the Bill means the suppression of the licences at all the Metropolitan stations, where no such accommodation as that mentioned in the Bill is required, because the stations are all covered in, and passengers have only a few minutes to wait. That argument really seems to me to concede the whole case, and one paper had said that it was impossible to tell what the result of this legislation might be if it was applied to the railways of the Metropolis. My Lords, I should have thought this was a very dangerous argument to advance, because it admits that they do provide refreshment rooms, and they do not provide waiting rooms. The passengers, having only a few minutes to wait, have not much time to devote to taking refreshments; and it is obvious to all that immediately adjacent to every Metropolitan station there is ample accommodation for the sale of intoxicating liquors and refreshments. But if your Lordships see fit to exempt the Metropolitan area from the operation of this Bill, I, for one, do not think you should refuse to consult the convenience of railway passengers in this matter all over the United Kingdom. It is not my purpose to argue the question from a temperance point of view, but I do think it is rather hard, when you reflect upon the infirmity of purpose of many classes of mankind, that a man who has no particular desire for refreshments, and having, perhaps, an hour or so to wait for a train, should have to wait in a refreshment room. There might be misgivings in the mind of some as to the desirability of allowing such a state of things that people could not wait even a few minutes at a railway station without having intoxicating liquors brought immediately under their notice. I think it is desirable that persons who are merely waiting for a train, and desiring to obtain shelter from the weather, should be able to get it and to warm themselves at a fire without being exposed to temptation or being placed under an obligation to "take something for the good of the house." I hope your Lordships will see that in the passing of this Bill you will be promoting the convenience of the ordinary railway passengers, and that you will be removing from them a severe temptation to which there is no reason why they should be exposed. The paper of which I have spoken points out that railway companies let their rooms to contractors, and that it would be impossible to make them responsible for the waiting rooms. My Lords, if the railway companies have not sufficient control over these premises, I do not think that is any reason why your Lordships should not interfere, or refrain from making proper legislative arrangements in the matter. But that is all matter of arrangement; and as part of the scheme provision might be made, if it were thought proper, for the railway companies withdrawing those contracts with regard to the refreshment rooms. The companies would be liable to compensate the licence holders, in case the contracts were put an end to, and Parliament will act most injudiciously if it refuses to entertain a Bill which is otherwise proper merely because the companies have made arrangements for withdrawing their waiting-rooms from their own control. Railway companies have no right, for the sake of making valuable concessions of this kind, to deprive the ordinary travellers of the shelter and accommodation which is necessary. Providing refreshment rooms for the sale of intoxicating liquors is no part of the business of railway companies, and it is the convenience of the public alone which should be studied in this matter. My Lords, the position is shortly this—shelter is necessary as a part of the railway accommodation, and refreshment rooms are not a necessary part of the railway accommodation. They are a great convenience to the public, no doubt; but if we are called upon to choose whether proper shelter shall be afforded to railway passengers, or whether refreshments shall be provided for them, there is an advantage and an obligation in providing waiting rooms. If one of those things can be provided for, and not both, I think, my Lords, there can be no doubt that the shelter should be provided for the ordinary passengers, and that the refreshments should have to be sought at a little inconvenience by those who wished to drink elsewhere. My Lords, I beg to move that your Lordships should give a Second Reading to the Bill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Earl Beauchamp.*)

*LORD BRABOURNE: My Lords, as no noble Lord appears disposed to rise I would like to say a few words on the public aspect of this Bill. I had hoped that the Government would have considered the difficulty of dealing with the Licensing Laws in a fragmentary manner, and would have undertaken the responsibility of moving the rejection of the measure. The noble Lord has stated that in promoting this Bill he is not actuated by any hostility to the licensed victuallers, and that his whole consideration is for the accommodation of the ordinary traveller. What I wish to point out, and what I think this Bill proves, is that even those who are actuated by the most benevolent intentions very often in carrying them out produce the greatest inconvenience, especially when the object of those intentions is to interfere in some way or other with the public. Misdirected benevolence is sometimes productive of very great inconvenience. This Bill is very curious in this respect—it seeks to punish one party for the alleged misconduct of the other, and proposes that when railway companies have let to responsible persons refreshment rooms at their stations, those persons are to forfeit their licences if the railway companies do not afford proper accommodation for waiting rooms, adjacent to the refreshment rooms, over which the person possessing the licence has not the slightest control. That is a rather curious feature of the proposed legislation, which I do not think your Lordships will be at all disposed to adopt. The Bill is drawn in a most extraordinary manner; and, however good it might be to have waiting rooms everywhere, your Lordships, I think, must look at the question from a practical point of view. At many stations there is only the most limited accommodation possible, and I would ask your Lordships whether it really is a hardship for any one of the travelling public that he should be required to stand in the same room with a man who may be drinking half a pint of beer or a bottle of ginger-beer where only a limited space is allotted for refreshments? It is proposed that these licences should be forfeited rather than that anyone should be exposed to so slight an inconvenience. My Lords, it appears to me that this is an absolutely useless Bill, and only deals with a fragment of a very great subject, which your Lordships have already dealt with in one sense, and with which you will probably be called upon to deal again by transferring the granting of licences from one body to another. At the present moment the Licensing Justices make the fullest inquiry into every case —they invariably insist upon having plans of the premises sent to them, and it is not at all an easy matter sometimes to satisfy the requirements which the Justices impose. Almost in every case the licensed victuallers in the immediate neighbourhood of the station oppose to the utmost of their power applications for licences to railway refreshment rooms, because they take away trade from themselves, and I should have almost suspected that my noble Friend is not actuated so much by zeal and love for the railway passengers as for the licensed victuallers who are robbed of a considerable amount of custom by these rooms. Railway travellers ought to be able to obtain refreshments without being driven to seek them outside the station, and at the same time obtain shelter while waiting for their trains in public-houses. Especially is that the case on the Metropolitan lines, where passengers ought not to be compelled to leave the stations and perhaps cross the muddy streets in all kinds of weather for the purpose of obtaining the refreshments they require. Now, what does my noble Friend practically say in supporting this Bill? Practically, it comes to this—that the Licensing Magistrates have not done their duty. My Lords, although it is said, that "you should never prophesy unless you know," I venture to prophesy that the County Councils will have to deal with these matters before long. It is not improbable that the powers now exercised by the magistrates will be transferred to the County Councils before long, and why should your Lordships overweight the County Councils with the extraordinary provisions of this Bill? I think your Lordships may be satisfied with the way the Councils would perform these duties; but why should you step in and by a little peddling, trifling piece of legislation like this hamper the action of these bodies? Some of the provisions of the Bill were really very extraordinary. I have not had the opportunity of seeing the paper to which my noble Friend has referred, and which, I have no doubt, contains much stronger arguments. But I almost wonder that my noble Friend did not go further, and propose that the railway companies should provide that hot water should be ready for any passenger who might desire to have it in a room apart without the addition of brandy and soda, or anything. What a condition those who should be responsible would be in under this legislation! A man might enter a refreshment-room at night and find no fire, and under those circumstances the licence would be forfeited. This is not the kind of legislation your Lordships' House should indulge in or Parliament accept. It is totally unwarranted, is not asked for by a single individual, and would only cause considerable inconvenience. I have no doubt that my noble Friend's intentions are of the most benevolent character, as I should expect from him, but I do hope your Lordships will reject this legislation as not suitable to be entered upon by your Lordships' House, and as only inflicting a grievance on a not inconsiderable section of the public. My Lords, I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES: My Lords, I hope your Lordships will not give a Second Reading to the Bill. The noble Lord who brings it forward says there are no statistics known or possible to be given as to the numbers of refreshment rooms and waiting rooms on the Metropolitan Railways. I should think it is hardly necessary to go into that, but I may mention that on the Metropolitan District Railway there are three refreshment rooms which were put up for the special purpose of meeting demands made by the public after the railways had been started some length of time—namely, at Mansion House, Victoria Station, and Sloane Square Station. In addition to that, certain portions of the railway are used under joint powers between the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan District, and on that portion there are also three refreshment rooms, namely, at South Kensington, Gloucester Road, and High Street, Kensington. That makes altogether six refreshment rooms on the Underground Railway. At all the stations, however, there is proper waiting room accommodation both for ladies and men. There is, consequently, no ground for saying the wants of the public are not properly looked after in this matter. If the Bill be passed, there is not much doubt that the refreshment rooms which I have enumerated would ultimately be taken away, because, by Clause 2, the powers are made retrospective; and it is provided that, unless it was proved to the satisfaction of the magistrates that these rooms have been properly kept up during the preceding twelve months, no licence is to be given or renewed.

The Metropolitan systems are different from any other railway system in this country; and I think I am within the mark when I say that some 500 trains pass through the stations in a day. The system of rapid traffic prevailing on the Underground Railways in London is one which does not require extensive waiting-room accommodation. The public do not go into a railway station simply to sit down and wait; the trains pass too frequently for that; and at all the stations, especially those on the higher level, there is ample accommodation in the way of waiting rooms.

*EARL BROWNLOW: My Lords, the noble Earl, in explaining the objects of the Bill, said it was for the purpose of inducing the licensing authorities to obtain proper information, before granting licences, as to the accommodation provided. Now, my Lords, as a matter of fact, the authorities do make very careful inquiries on the subject at the present time; but the noble Earl, by his Bill, seeks to throw the whole *onus probandi* upon the unfortunate person, who is anxious to lease the refreshment rooms, of proving that there is sufficient and proper separate waiting room for the accommodation of passengers of all classes—general accommodation for the passengers of the company. He expects information to be given to the Licensing Authorities by the person wishing to take a licence as to the accommodation afforded by railway companies for the many thousands of passengers travelling along their lines. I do not know how he is to get that unless the railway company supply the information. So much for Clause 2. Then Clause 3 seems to be a still more exacting provision. Clause 3 provides that the licensing authorities shall call upon the lessee to prove that this accommodation has been maintained during the whole period that the licence has been in force, and, in the case of a new licence, during the preceding year. I do not know how the lessee is to do this in the case of new licences required for new railways. The whole machinery of the Bill seems to be very cumbrous. Clause 4 is also very extraordinary. This clause says that if at any time the Company does not keep its waiting room in a proper condition, or the fire or gas is allowed to go out, the lessee is to be deprived of his licence, and to be deemed to be selling intoxicating liquors on unlicensed premises. My Lords, I cannot see how such a clause as that could possibly be carried out; for it would give to any cantankerous passenger who happened to find a fire gone out the right of proceeding against the licence-holder to deprive him of his licence. The Bill, it seems to me, would be monstrously unjust, and I cannot conceive how the machinery could possibly work in any satisfactory way. Feeling that, and having heard the explanation of the noble Lord as to the way in which it would work, I must say, my Lords, that I cannot support this measure.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, although I can undoubtedly see strong objections to some of the details of the Bill, I am not altogether so strongly opposed to it as the noble Earl who has just spoken. I cannot help saying that I think there is something to be said in favour of the principle of the Bill. I do not think anyone will say that it is a desirable thing that the drinking bar at a railway station should be the only room to which passengers can resort. As a matter of principle that cannot be denied; but, whether it constitutes any large or crying grievance at the present time, I am not in a position to express any confident opinion. I think that the noble Earl who has brought forward the Bill is entitled to say that the object of it is a sound one in itself. With regard to the machinery of the Bill, some of the objections to it are very strong, though I cannot agree with all of them. It does not seem to me to be such a mischievous thing as was made out that the person applying for the licence should have the onus thrown upon him of proving that there is accommodation for the travelling public at the station, because, in point of fact, no one could apply for a licence without the concurrence and agreement of the railway company, who would consequently prove that there was proper waiting-room accommodation. I cannot see the slightest hardship in that. But beyond that I do not see any necessity to go. I can quite conceive that some Bill might be passed which would be of advantage in the direction pointed to by this measure; but I cannot vote for this Bill in regard to its machinery, nor do I think we have before us sufficient evidence as to the actual state of accommodation provided by the railway companies to justify such legislation.

*EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, in reply, I would point out that the person applying for a licence is the agent or tenant of the railway company, and, therefore, I fail to recognize any hardship whatever in imposing on him the obligation, and showing that ample waiting-room accommodation is provided. Then it has been said that the magistrates satisfy themselves as to the accommodation afforded before granting a licence. It is true that the magistrates have to satisfy themselves as to the accommodation for refreshment rooms, but not as to proper accommodation outside the refreshment rooms for the general purposes of the public. My Lords, I am quite satisfied with the discussion, and recognize that it is a difficult subject on which to legislate properly. I would rather now, therefore, ask permission to withdraw the Bill, reserving the right to bring it forward in some other shape, fortified by the support I have received from the noble Earl on the front Opposition Bench (the Earl of Kimberley).

Amendment (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

Original Motion and Bill (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

COMPANIES' RELIEF BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE EARL OF CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I may state that it has been changed from the form in which I had the honour of introducing it last year. Certain modifications have been made in it, in order to meet the desire expressed at that time by the noble Lord on the Woolsack. In withdrawing the Bill last year, I said that I would ask your Lordships, when I introduced it this year, to refer it to a Select Committee.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I feel bound to say that the noble Lord has misunderstood me as expressing any approbation of the Bill. On the contrary, I thought that Bill was likely to be mischievous. I observe that this Bill goes somewhat further than the last, because the immunity of the Bill is extended to persons who have taken shares up to the time of the passing of the Act. The settlement of the law on the point was pronounced in the beginning of last May. I think it would be a proper subject for the Committee to consider when they come to deal with the provisions of the Bill. That was the principal objection which I took to the Bill; but, inasmuch as the noble Lord has agreed that it shall go to a Committee who shall receive evidence, I do not at present oppose it.

Bill read 2ª.

DECORATIONS FOR THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1884-5.—QUESTION.

*THE EARL OF STRAFFORD: My Lords, I have to ask the noble Lord the Under Secretary of State for War whether any decorations of the Orders of the Medjidié and of the Osmanié were offered by the Egyptian Government to the officers of the British Army who served in the Nile and Desert Columns in the years 1884-5; and whether such offer had been accepted or declined by the military authorities at home? I believe that there is a feeling existing among the officers who composed the Nile and the Desert Columns in Egypt in 1884-5 that the Egyptian and Turkish Orders of the Medjidié and of the Osmanié, which had been granted to those who had fought in the Campaign of 1882-4, were, through some unintentional oversight on the part of the authorities at home, withheld from them. Your Lordships will remember that there have been three campaigns in Egypt. In the Campaign of 1882, conducted by Lord Wolseley, including the action of Tel-el-Kebir, the Turkish Orders of the Medjidié and Osmanié were conferred upon British officers. Two years later, in that of 1884, under Sir Gerald Graham, including the battles of Teb and Tamai, the decorations, which had been honourably won, were given to British officers. In 1885 the campaign undertaken for the relief of General Gordon comprised such well-fought actions as Abu Klea, Abu Kru, Metammeh, and Kirbekan; but to those who shared in these dangers and glories I believe the decorations, which had been conferred on their brethren of the Army and Navy for the campaigns previously fought in 1882 and the early part of 1884, were not granted.

Although in all the elements of danger, hardship, and suffering the Nile and Desert Columns had a heavier strain to bear than those endured in 1882, the decorations had not been received which had been given in the previous campaigns. The services of the officers were not less distinguished than those of the officers in the previous campaigns. The Khedive recognized these facts, and issued the Khedivial bronze star. I have not been able to ascertain the exact number of deaths and casualties that took place in the Nile Column of the Campaign of 1884-5; but when I remind your Lordships that in the Desert Column they amounted to 14 officers killed and 23 wounded, and that the number of men killed was 115, and wounded 243, it will be recognized that all ranks showed the same discipline, gallantry, and endurance which have always characterized British troops; and I feel sure that it was owing to some oversight and mistake that those decorations have not been issued to those gallant officers.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS): No such decorations appear to have been offered by the Egyptian Government to British officers for this campaign, except those employed with the Egyptian to Army.

ARMY DISCIPLINE.

LORD THRING: My Lords, I have to ask the noble Lord the Under Secretary of State for War whether the subjoined extract from the *Times* of Wednesday, March 13, 1889, is an accurate account of the facts:—

> "Private Collins, of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, was yesterday removed from Gosport Barracks to undergo a sentence of five years' penal servitude. Collins was tried for striking a sergeant, and was sentenced to six months' hard labour. The sentence was read out on parade, when prisoner used a filthy expression to the adjutant; he was thereupon placed in the guard-room, and was afterwards tried for the second offence. The sentence of five years' penal servitude was promulgated yesterday, having been confirmed by the General commanding the district."

LORD DE ROS: My Lords, before the noble Lord the Under Secretary of State answers that question, I should like to express the opinion that both these offences were deserving of the most severe punishment. It is impossible to enforce discipline in a regiment if a private is not severely punished for striking a sergeant. The second offence was using a filthy expression towards an officer. That would have been formerly an offence to visit with corporal punishment, and I am sorry that this form of punishment is abolished. The mitigation introduced within the last few years in the punishment for offences of this kind has had a most prejudicial effect. I feel certain that such power was much required, because it gave larger powers to the commanding officers to deal with irregularities of all kinds. At the same time, I do not think that your Lordships' House is a proper place for discussing questions of discipline of this description.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, if this be a true statement of the facts as they occurred, the sentence, in my opinion, was nothing short of monstrous and outrageous, and wholly unsuited to the offence mentioned in the question. When it is publicly stated that such a sentence has been passed, it will evoke a feeling that it was a most tremendous one, and I cannot see that such a sentence ought to be inflicted in any case unless under proper circumstances. Five years' penal servitude is a tremendous sentence for using even filthy language, and in this case seems to be out of all proportion to the offence.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I cannot agree with the noble Lord that the sentence was undeserved. I think it was perfectly just and proper. Offences against discipline in the Army are extremely serious.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH: My Lords, I think this is another instance of the necessity for corporal punishment. Had corporal punishment been retained in the Army the second offence would probably never have been committed, and it is the abolition of corporal punishment that causes the necessity for these long terms of imprisonment. It seems to me, my Lords, that this was a very grave offence, which I do not think is quite appreciated by the civilian mind.

LORD HARRIS: My Lords, I am not prepared to endorse the opinion of my noble and gallant Friend. I cannot say, from my personal point of view, that it is a desirable thing to ruin a man by the infliction of such punishment upon him. However desirable corporal punishment may be for boys, I do not think it is desirable for grown up men. save in those cases in which it is expressly recognized by the law. Neither am I prepared to recognize that Parliament should under no circumstances whatever take an interest in the maintenance of discipline in the Army. But I do think that in so serious a matter as the discipline of the Army it is incumbent upon anyone, either in your Lordships' House or in the House of Commons, who wishes to make a question public with regard to the Army, that he should first inquire at head-quarters whether the statement on which he founds his question is correct or not. I have information that the extract from the *Times* is absolutely incorrect, and that there were very much stronger grounds in this case for the increase of punishment than are shown in the statement on which the question is founded. I think it would have been better had the noble Lord taken care to ascertain that the circumstances were such as to require a Parliamentary discussion on the matter in question. The question put to me by the noble Lord is whether a certain statement in the *Times* is accurate. It is not accurate as far as it goes. The statement is that Private Collins had his sentence of six months' hard labour for striking a sergeant increased to five years' penal servitude for using a filthy expression to the adjutant, and impliedly for no other offences. The facts are that he was tried and found guilty of (1) using insubordinate language to his superior officer (adjutant); (2) striking his superior officer (provost-sergeant), being in the execution of his duty; (3) using threatening language to the same; (4) striking his superior officer (lance-corporal). He had been twice previously convicted. In these circumstances I do not think the sentence was excessive. I am informed that Private Collins has served nearly ten years. With regard to the question of improvement in the percentage of punishments for offences in the Army, I am able to give the noble Lord some information as to the number of men in the Army who have been tried by court martial. They were, in 1885, ·74; in 1886, ·70; in 1887, ·56; in 1888, ·52. The number of minor punishments in the Army at home, exclusive of Royal Artillery, was, in 1885, 134,912; in 1886, 129,193; in 1887, 116,045; and in 1888, 104,765. The statistics of military prisons were as follows:—Brixton would hold 493, and on the 18th of March contained 117 prisoners; Gosport would hold 166, and contained 120; Taunton would hold 154, and contained 37; Aldershot would hold 162, and contained 52; Chester would hold 164, and contained 97; and Stirling would hold 48, and contained 25; the accommodation, therefore, being 1,187, and the total number of prisoners 448. These figures show a gradual decrease in the number of convictions. As to minor punishments, the figures had been reduced from 134,912 in 1885 to 104,017 in 1888. I am able to say that the military authorities are entirely satisfied with the decrease which has resulted from the summary dealing with military offences, and I hope and have no reason to doubt that the decrease, which I have been glad to state to the noble Lord, will continue in future years.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I think that the noble Lord, so far from finding fault with my noble Friend, ought to be glad of the opportunity which this question has afforded him of explaining the real facts of the case has afforded him. What has been the result in this matter? It has been shown that the sentence, which has been held out as one of great severity and hardship, was not given under the circumstances stated by the *Times*. I should have thought that was a most satisfactory conclusion to have been brought about, and it shows that my noble Friend was justified in asking the question. I congratulate the noble Lord on his having been able to make the very satisfactory statement he has made with regard to the decrease in military offences.

LORD HARRIS: I am quite satisfied, my Lords, with the change that has taken place.

House adjourned at a quarter before
Six o'clock, to Thursday next,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 26*th March*, 1889.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to hear from some Member of the Government what is proposed to be done with this Bill. Is it a measure of a similar character to the Bills of last year which imposed a tax upon the public for the drainage and improvement of certain districts. In the absence of information I beg to move that the Bill be read a third time ont his day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I hope that the hon. Gentleman will not persist in his Amendment. This is not at all a Bill of a similar character to the Bills that were introduced last year. It does not propose any allocation whatever of the public money, but it simply sanctions certain works which have been authorized by the Board of Works for the drainage of certain areas.

MR. CONYBEARE: At any rate, in the absence of any Member of the Government to explain the effect of the Bill, I would submit that the Third Reading ought to be postponed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

QUESTIONS.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any Justice of the Peace, being a shareholder in a railway or other company having licensed premises within the county, city, or borough for which he acts, was disqualified from sitting as a magistrate at licensing sessions, and liable to penalties for so doing?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): The Secretary of State has no authority to give an opinion on a point of law. I can only refer my hon. Friend to the 60th section of 35 & 36 Vict., c. 94; but, assuming that the words in the question "having licensed premises" mean being "a retailer of intoxicating liquors," the answer, as I am advised, would seem to be in the affirmative.

POSTAGE TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston) asked the Postmaster General what amount he gained to the Revenue per annum for overcharging Members of Parliament whose letters are re-addressed from the House of Commons Post Office outside the whole of the London districts; and, what arrears were at present owing for such re-addresses, and by whom?

*A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Wigtonshire): As the Postmaster General stated in reply to my hon. Friend on the 5th inst., re-directed letters for Members of Parliament are treated exactly in the same way as re-directed letters for other persons, and I cannot admit the propriety of the term "overcharge" which my hon. Friend uses in reference to this matter. The revenue derived from the re-direction of Members' letters from the House of Commons to places outside the Metropolitan District is estimated at about six shilling sa week. No arrears can accrue, because the re-direction charge is collected on delivery. If the payment of the charge is in any case refused the delivery is not effected, and the letter is returned to the sender.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Is the hon. Baronet aware that many people indulge in the habit of sending circulars to Members of Parliament which are re-directed and sent on, thereby putting Members to a considerable and an unnecessary expense?

*SIR H. MAXWELL: The hon. Member had better put that question to my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General.

BOMBARDMENT OF TUNGI.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE (St. Pancras, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Portuguese Government had paid the indemnity due to British-Indian subjects for the destruction of their property in the bombardment of Tungi and Minengani; and, if not, what steps Her Majesty's Government proposed to take to enforce their claims; and whether the Portuguese had yet evacuated the territory north of the Minengani River, as maintained both by Her Majesty's Government and by that of Germany to be her proper boundary?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester N.E.): It will be seen on reference to p.p. 82 and 83 of "Africa, No. 10 of 1888," presented to the House in December last, that the Portuguese Government have declined to comply with the request for compensation made to them by Her Majesty's Government. No claim can be made according to International Law. So far as Her Majesty's Government are aware, the Portuguese Government have not evacuated the territory north of the Minengani River.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE: Was not that the opinion of Her Majesty's Government when the case was first brought forward?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think I stated at the time that whether the claims would be paid or not would depend on the circumstances of the case, and whether a notification of the bombardment had been given to Her Majesty's subjects. It appears that due notice was given, and in accordance with International Law no claim could be made.

IRELAND—PARTY EMBLEMS.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether, in the case of Andrew Cole, publican, who, on the 11th March, at Londonderry, was prosecuted by Head Constable Webster, R.I.C., under 6 and 7 William IV., for displaying "party emblems," when the offence consisted of defendant's wife and a number of girls waving pocket handkerchiefs when Father Stephens and other prisoners were being conveyed along the street, the prosecution was authorized by the Government?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): The Constabulary report that the public-house named in the question had on several occasions been the scene of demonstrations in favour of the prisoners charged with the murder of District Inspector Martin while they were being conveyed to and from the railway station. The prosecution referred to in this question was instituted by the police on their own responsibility, and I may add that the magistrates made no rule in the case, being of opinion that the acts complained of did not come within the statute.

MR. J. ELLIS: Did not the head constable admit that there were more armed persons present than civilians? As the same thing was done in adjoining counties without a prosecution following, why was the distinction made?

MR. MADDEN: I am unable to say I have no information as to specific matters of fact.

THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether it is the intention of the Local Government Board to issue a Circular to the County Councils, under Section 53 of "The Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1888," in order to place the recommendations of the Boundary Commission before the Councils, or whether the Councils can proceed to make the representations in regard to those recommendations without awaiting any such Circular?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's-in-the-East): I have forwarded to the Council of each county affected by the Report of the Boundary Commissioners a copy of so much of the Report as relates to the particular county, and I have brought specially under the attention of the County Council the provisions of Section 53 of the Local Government Act.

POSTAGE TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General whether he can give the date on which he decided that the reduced rate of postage by the long-sea route to Australia should commence on the 1st of January, 1889; and why the announcement of this reduction in postal rates was not included in the "Postal Guide" for the present quarter?

*Sir HERBERT MAXWELL: In the absence of my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General, I have to state that the rates of postage are fixed under the authority of the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, the instrument being a warrant signed by two of their Lordships. The warrant fixing the postage on letters sent to Australia by the long sea route is dated the 17th of December, 1888; and the House will readily understand that this was too late to admit of the new rates being embodied in the Tables of Rates published in the Post Office Guide issued nominally on the 1st of January, 1889, but, of course, passed for the Press considerably before that date.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

Mr. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland, having regard to the charges as to the treatment of political prisoners proved against Mr. Francis MacGillicuddy Eager, ex-Governor of Limerick Gaol, and reported in the Debates of this House, if it is the intention of the Lord Chancellor to continue that gentleman in the Commission of the Peace for the County of Clare; and if he is aware that the appointment in question has excited much surprise and indignation in the district in which Mr. Eager resides?

Mr. MADDEN: The gentleman referred to in the Question was appointed to the Commission of the Peace in the usual way on the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the county. I am not aware that the appointment in question has been received in the manner suggested in the Question. The Lord Chancellor sees no reason why Mr. Eager should not continue to hold the Commission of the Peace.

Mr. O'KEEFFE: I may inform the hon. and learned Gentleman that I have received a number of letters from influential persons residing in the district protesting against the action of this gentleman.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. COBB (Warwickshire, Rugby) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he could state who supplied to the Secretary of the Special Commission the copy of Messrs. Walsh and Sons' shorthand notes, from which the proceedings in O'Donnell v. Walter were printed in the Blue Book issued for the purposes of the Commission; whether such copy was returned by the Queen's Printers to the Secretary of the Commission, together with the proof of the print of the Blue Book; and, whether any Member of the House desiring it can be afforded an opportunity of seeing the copy from which such notes were printed?

Mr. STUART WORTLEY: The Secretary of State has no means other than such as may be accessible to the hon. Member of ascertaining the facts regarding which information is sought in the first and second paragraphs of the question. The Secretary of State has no power to authorize the inspection by anyone of the document mentioned. Authority for inspection can be given only by the Commissioners themselves.

THE LAND JUDGES COURT (IRELAND).

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether, having regard to the entry of an irregular Judgment in the books of the Land Judges Court (Ireland), he would cause an inquiry to be made, with a view to ascertain whether the entry was made by any officer of the Court?

Mr. MADDEN: I have no power to cause such an inquiry to be made.

Mr. O'BRIEN: Who has authority?

Mr. MADDEN: The question as to the records of the Court rests with the Commissioners. The Government have no power to require that any particular course shall be taken.

Mr. O'BRIEN: In the case to which I refer the Judges discharged the Order, but the entry is entirely different.

Mr. MADDEN: The hon. Member is altogether misinformed.

LO BENGULA.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies has received official information that Lo Bengula, the Chief of the Matabele, has granted to Mr. Charles Rudd a concession of the mineral rights throughout his dominions, and which contains a clause that no other concession in respect to mineral rights or other industrial undertakings can be granted without the consent of Mr. Rudd, and that, acting on this concession, Mr Alfred Haggard was turned out of the country by a force of Matabeles under the command of a European agent of Mr. Rudd; whether any request has been forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from Mr. Rudd or his agents, or from the Cape Government, requesting him to confirm or to express his approval of this concession; whether such confirmation or approval has been expressed; whether he is aware that it has been stated in the Cape newspapers that one of the conditions of the concession is that Mr. Rudd will maintain a gunboat on the Zambesi River; and, if so, what flag this vessel will carry, and against whom it is contemplated to use this armed ship; and, whether he is aware that the territory in regard to which this exclusive concession has been granted is as large as France and exceedingly wealthy in mining and other natural products?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, Toxteth): It has been officially reported that Lo Bengula has granted to Messrs. Rudd, Maguire and Thompson a concession which is of the nature indicated in the hon. Member's question, except that it does not include any "industrial undertakings" other than mining. The concession authorizes the holders of it "to take all necessary steps to exclude" from Matabeleland "all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, or mining rights therein," and under this authority Mr. Alfred Haggard and others are stated to have been turned back in November or December of last year by some Matabeles under Mr. Maguire, one of the concessionaires. The Cape Government has taken no action in relation to this concession. Mr. Rudd has "solicited the co-operation" of Her Majesty's Government in accomplishing the objects of the concession. Her Majesty's Government have expressed no approval of it, and have no power to confirm or disallow concessions in Matabeleland. The condition in the concession as to the armed steamer is that it, or in lieu of it £500, shall be delivered to Lo Bengula, who, presumably, desires it as a protection against foreign aggressions. There is no provision as to its maintenance; and its flag, if any, would apparently be Lo Bengula's. The territory is believed to be about three-fourths of the area of France, and is said to be rich in minerals; but little is definitely known.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Is the Colonial Office prepared to make any representation to Lo Bengula about these concessions?

*Baron H. de WORMS: We have no power to make any representation.

Mr. O. MORGAN (Battersea): May I ask whether this territory is not supposed to be under British influence, and, if so, whether concessions can be made, not to British, but to German, subjects?

*Baron H. de WORMS: It is under the sphere of British influence, but I am afraid that that is rather a vague term. We have no power to prevent the real rulers of the country from making a concession. We can only advise them not to do so.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Did not Lord Knutsford, in May last, declare very peremptorily that the Government would not permit any concession to be made without the previous consent of the High Commissioner?

*Baron H. de WORMS: I do not think the hon. Gentleman is quite correct.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Has not Lo Bengula sent envoys to Her Majesty's Government, and have not the Government ample opportunities for making representations to those envoys?

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Before the hon. Gentleman answers the question, allow me to ask him again whether Lord Knutsford, in the latter end of May last, did not use the very words as to this territory which I have attributed to him?

*Baron H. de WORMS: I do not think the Government had any power to approve or disapprove.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: But did not Lord Knutsford, writing of this very territory—not in reference to this concession, but before the concession was negotiated—say, in express terms, that the Government would allow no concession to be granted?

*Baron H. de WORMS: The hon. Gentleman had better give notice of the question. We do not allow concessions to be granted in the territory between the Shashi and Macloutsi Rivers, which is in dispute between Lo Bengula and Khama.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF FEMALE PRISONERS.

Mr. MAC NEILL asked the Solicitor General for Ireland if he could state why the two untried female prisoners from Gweedore, Margaret Cull and Annie Doherty, who were on Friday week, notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Rev. J. Doherty, the Prison Chaplain, deprived by the Governor of Derry Gaol of warm clothing provided for them for the journey between Derry and Letterkenny, were again deprived last Saturday of dresses and hats provided for them by friends; whether, in spite of the promise of the Solicitor General, the Governor, while allowing them shawls, refused to permit them to wear the hats and warm dresses so provided for them; whether they were obliged to go from Derry to Letterkenny bareheaded and badly clothed in inclement weather, though sufficient clothing was sent into the prison for their use; had he given directions to the Prisons Board to entertain in the future communications coming from chaplains of prisons relative to the welfare of prisoners directly, without the intervention of the Governors; and what reply had the Prisons Board made to these communications?

Mr. MADDEN: With reference to the specific matters of fact referred to in the question, I have called for a Report. The question has only appeared on the Paper to-day; but I may say that I ascertained that the Prisons Board had given directions to the Governor of the gaol that warm clothing supplied to these female prisoners should be allowed to be worn by them. I cannot answer the question any further.

Mr. MAC NEILL: As these females have been further remanded until Thursday, and as one of them has a baby in her arms, will the hon. and learned Gentleman undertake that if they are supplied with warm clothing they shall be allowed to wear it?

Mr. MADDEN: Orders have been given, and I have not the least doubt that they will be supplied with warm clothing.

Mr. MAC NEILL: I must press the matter. On the last occasion I entreated that the Governor might be directed to allow these poor women to wear the clothing offered to be supplied them, but I am informed that he refused.

Mr. MADDEN: The instructions which have been given are that warm clothing is to be allowed, and I have no doubt that those instructions will be carried out.

EMIGRANTS TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

Mr. O'KEEFFE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if his attention had been directed to the condition and treatment of emigrants, principally from Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary, as reported in to-day's papers, numbering 1,800 persons, on their arrival in Buenos Ayres during last month; if those emigrants, men, women and children, contrary to the representations held out by the agents of the Argentine Republic, were totally neglected on their arrival, unprovided with food, lodging, or means of obtaining work; and if Her Majesty's Government would immediately telegraph that the Consular Agent at Buenos Ayres will assume the responsibility of preserving the lives of the destitute persons referred to?

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Has the hon. Gentleman seen the statement in the papers that some of these emigrants have been sent back, and that 10,000 Frenchmen, mostly labouring men, are unable to find work, and are starving.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Has the hon. Member given notice of this question?

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: No, Sir.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Then the hon. Member had better put it down upon the paper.

Sir J. FERGUSSON: A despatch on this subject was received yesterday. Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Ayres states that 1,800 persons, the great majority of whom had come from Ireland, had disembarked from a large steamship. Immigrants' barracks for 2,000 persons have been provided, but it happened that a large body of Italian immigrants had arrived a day or two previously, and, though the newcomers were not "totally neglected," the accommodation that could be improvised for them was very inadequate. Fortunately, in anticipation of the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from this country, Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires had assisted in forming a Committee of British residents, by whom most liberal supplies of food and other comforts were given to these poor people, and on the next day large numbers of them were lodged in the private houses of the members of the Committee, until the barracks should be available, or the immigrants should be sent up country in due course. The hon. Member will see that the spontaneous action of Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and the British residents renders any special orders unnecessary, but Mr. Jenner has been already directed to report upon the condition of the immigrants who are arriving, and Her Majesty's Government are considering whether some special agency is not required in order that those from this country may be properly advised.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the French Government have issued a warning to French subjects, and will the Foreign Office follow that example, and pending the arrival of an official report, issue a warning to poor Irish people to abstain from emigrating until the true facts of the case have been ascertained?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No intelligence has reached the Foreign Office from the Argentine Republic of any ill-treatment of emigrants, other than the unfortunate occurrence which I have just mentioned, but the Minister representing this country has been directed specially to report upon the condition of the emigrants.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: Will Her Majesty's Government follow the example of the French Foreign Office, and issue a warning.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think the House will see that, as no allegations of ill-treatment or neglect have been received, it would be premature to warn persons against going to the Argentine Republic. I am glad to know that the British residents on the spot are fully alive to the necessity of assisting the emigrants; and in the despatch to which I have referred, it is stated that a special Irish settlement has been formed, where Irish emigrants will receive proper attention.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Cannot some provision be made, by means of which the Emigration Office would be able to give information with regard to the Argentine Republic, similar to that which is given with reference to emigration to our own Colonies? It is better to prevent the evil on this side than on the other side of the water.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Foreign Office is in communication with the Treasury on the subject, as it will require a certain expenditure of money. I had an interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night on the subject.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): May I ask whether, considering that large numbers of emigrants are about to be sent out by the agents of the Argentine Republic, Her Majesty's Government will obtain some guarantee from the representative of the Argentine Republic that proper care will be taken of the people on their arrival?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: It would be more convenient that I should have notice of that question. I should then be able to give better information than it is possible to give off hand.

MR. LANE: I sent the hon. Baronet private notice by letter last night.

THE MUNSTER WINTER ASSIZES.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the Lord Lieutenant had received an influentially-signed memorial from the jurors of Cork, protesting against the continued selection of the city of Cork for the Munster Winter Assizes; had he also received a resolution, passed at a public meeting in Cork, which was attended by Deputy Lieutenants, Magistrates, and Merchants, of all creeds and politics, condemning the habitual practice of excluding Roman Catholics from the jury box whilst compelling them to attend court daily for five or six weeks at Christmas time;

and what action had the Lord Lieutenant taken in the matter.

Mr. MADDEN: The Lord Lieutenant has received a memorial from the jurors of Cork complaining of the continued selection of Cork for the Munster Winter Assizes. The same memorial contains an addendum to one of the resolutions alleged to have been carried by a show of hands on the subject of the religious constitution of the the jury. No separate resolution on the subject has been received. There is no foundation for the statement that jurors have been rejected on the ground of their religious belief. The objection raised to selecting Cork for the Munster Winter Assizes will be carefully considered before passing the Order in Council fixing the next Winter Assizes.

Mr. LANE: Have any steps been taken in consequence of the resolution of condemnation?

Mr. MADDEN: The memorial has been received, and I believe there is an addendum attached to it which does not, however, appear to have been passed formally.

Mr. LANE: Was not the resolution in reference to the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the jury added to the memorial?

Mr. MADDEN: I believe that it was forwarded as an addendum, but it formed no part of the substance of the memorial.

ARMY MEDICAL OFFICERS.

Dr. TANNER asked the Secretary of State for War if it was true that an application having been made to the War Office by the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, asking that a member of and from the College might be appointed upon the proposed Commission of Inquiry into the status and emoluments of Medical Officers in Her Majesty's Army, whether the Irish College has been refused on the ground that the English Colleges should represent the entire medical interest?

Dr. KENNY (Cork, S.) also asked whether attention had been directed to a statement contained in a Circular, dated 16th March instant, issued by the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland, relative to the appointments of the Commission of Inquiry as to the status and emoluments of Army Medical Officers, to the effect that the "President and Council of that body feel that a slur has been cast on the College by his refusal to allow it the same representation on the Commission which has been conceded unasked to the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians of England;" whether he was aware of the intense feeling of indignation which exists in medical centres in Ireland on account of his refusal to grant the representation sought; and whether he would explain on what principle he bases his refusal to grant to the Irish medical bodies representation similar to that conceded to those in England, in whose hands the Irish institutions do not consider their interests can be safely entrusted?

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir; I have not seen the circular referred to, and am ignorant of its contents. I have not heard that the action taken in this matter has given rise to the feeling indicated by the hon. Member. I should much regret it if it is so. The reason for limiting the representation to the English Colleges is that it would be impossible to have representatives from all the colleges from which candidates come. It was, therefore, limited to those on the spot. I cannot myself see how the interests of a candidate from the Irish College in respect of his pay and *status* in the Army can differ from those of candidates from the English or other colleges; but if the hon. Member will point out to me in what the difference consists I will consider the point.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has the hon. Gentleman any objection to state whether the feeling mentioned in the question of the hon. Member for South Cork (Dr. Kenny) does exist; and whether the Government are prepared to reconsider the question owing to the natural resentment felt by the Irish Colleges at being excluded? Why not increase the number of Commissioners from eight to nine?

Mr. BRODRICK: There is already upon the Commission a graduate of one of the Irish Colleges who holds an Irish degree. The desire was to secure a compact Commission. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for War does not feel that he can take any further step unless it can be shown that the interests of Irish candidates differ from those of other candidates. If the right hon. Gentleman will confer with me privately, I will see whether the constitution of the Commission is not such as to secure everything he desires.

MR. SEXTON: If the only desire was to have a compact Commission, why was direct application made to two English Colleges to send representatives, while no such application was made to the Irish Colleges?

MR. BRODRICK: It was because the English Colleges were on the spot.

WEST COAST OF AFRICA

MR. MARUM (Kilkenny, N.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been called to the allegation that arms and ammunition are being imported and landed in large quantities on the West Coast of Africa by English consignors; and whether International or Colonial relations enable interference, or whether he will appoint additional Vice Consuls on that line of coast?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Member in his first notice of this question mentioned the East Coast of Africa, but I understand now that he only refers to the West Coast. I do not know if the allegation he notices refers to any particular part of that coast. I believe that some newspaper has stated that arms and ammunition are being imported into Liberia and conveyed across the Continent to the Arabs on the East Coast. It is very improbable. It has more than once been proposed that the importation of arms on the West Coast should be prevented by International agreement, but no arrangement has been found possible. No conceivable addition to Consular establishments could accomplish this purpose.

COUNTY COURTS.

MR. ALFRED THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government intend to bring in any Bill to extend the jurisdiction of County Courts, or otherwise to provide better facilities for the decision of disputes in the great provincial centres of population and trade?

MR. STUART WORTLEY: I am informed by the Lord Chancellor that, having regard to the recent extension of the County Courts jurisdiction and other judicial arrangements in progress, he has not included any proposals on the subject referred to by the hon. Member in the legislation which he desires to promote.

COLONEL HUGHES-HALLETT.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether any communication, written or oral, direct or indirect, has reached the Patronage Secretary from the Member for Rochester, conveying his intention or desire to vacate his seat; and whether the Government will take any, and what, action in the matter to relieve the Rochester Division from practical disfranchisement?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand): The hon. Gentleman asks me whether communications have passed between my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury and the hon. Member for Rochester with regard to his seat. I venture, with great respect to the House, to say that it would be most improper and unusual to ask that private communications unconnected with the discharge of his official duties which may pass between my hon. Friend or anyone holding his position on either side of the House, should be communicated to the House. I have reason to believe that the hon. Member for Rochester, who has been absent from the House during the present Session, has been disabled by severe and protracted illness, and steps will be taken to ascertain whether there is any reasonable hope that he will be able to return to the House or whether he wishes to vacate his seat.

MR. J. ELLIS: Is the First Lord of the Treasury in a position to assure the House that the only reason why the hon. Member for Rochester is absent from this House is illness?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think that the question is hardly one which the hon. Member is justified in putting. I have no personal knowledge of the circumstances whatever.

NAVAL DEFENCE OF PORTS.

MR. ATKINSON asked the First Lord of the Admiralty why he denied to shipowners and merchants of Hull the same facilities with reference to naval defence of ports which he has granted to Liverpool, Bristol, and ports of far less importance than Hull?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): In reply to my hon. Friend, I may say that I have been in communication on this subject with the hon. Member for East Hull, and I will inform him of the purport of our communication. The Admiralty are reluctant to increase the numbers of Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers at the present time, or until a decision has been arrived at as to how their services can be utilized in the event of war. Mobility is an essential condition for ships of the Navy, and the Admiralty have declined to localize ships to special ports. As the Act of 1873 now stands, the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers are not liable for service away from their own ports, except in case of invasion or apprehended invasion; so that, except in this contingency, the Admiralty, under the existing Act, have no means of availing themselves of their services. The Admiralty would be glad to give encouragement to this force when they can see a way of advantageously employing them. They are ready to supply guns, ammunition, and instruction; but they cannot undertake to supply ships for local ports.

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARD WORKMEN.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it was the fact that on Saturday, the 23rd instant, some 487 men were discharged from Devonport Dockyard and Keyham Factory; whether it is the fact that on Saturday next another 200 men will be warned; how many more men in the various Departments was it intended to discharge; why men who have served in the Dockyards for periods of four and six years were discharged without receiving any gratuity; whether it was the usual practice to treat on the same terms as to their discharge men who have been working for years in the yards and men who have been only temporarily engaged; why the men were kept waiting for six months after discharge before getting their bonus or gratuity; and why long service men were being discharged while others are retained who have been a far shorter time engaged?

LORD G. HAMILTON: A certain number of men were taken on for casual work in Devonport Dockyard, the terms of their engagement being that when the job on which they were engaged was finished their services would be no longer required. The work has been finished, and their employment lapses. An attempt has been made to organize an agitation against the Government for the so-called discharges; but the men have honourably declined to ignore the terms of their engagement.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): Will the noble Lord consider the desirability of introducing a system of casual employment into the dockyards?

LORD G. HAMILTON: It has been introduced for some time.

MR. CONYBEARE: Is the noble Lord aware that of 83 men who left the Keyham Factory on Saturday there were 14 whose term of service ranged from three years to 14 years and nine months. I should like to know how it is that the long service men have been discharged just as freely as the casuals?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The right hon. Member has been misinformed. Every man who has served 12 years is entitled to a gratuity, and in this case would receive his gratuity. After having received it he would be available for casual employment, and, of course, the terms upon which he engaged in casual work would be the same as that of other men.

MR. CONYBEARE: Am I to understand that the long service men are liable to be turned off by the Government at any time and taken on again as casual labourers?

LORD G. HAMILTON: If the hon. Gentleman has not understood the answer I gave to him I do not think I can add to it. A man is entitled after a certain number of years' service to a gratuity, and after he has received that gratuity he is available for casual work.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to give notice that on an early day I will call attention to the subject.

TITHE DISTRAINTS IN WALES.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he was aware that tithe distraints had been effected this year on four different occasions in the parishes of Llannor, Llanaelhaiarn, Llandwrog, and Llanfairfechan, in Carnarvonshire, when, although large and vociferous crowds, numbering several hundreds, assembled on each occasion, no breach of the peace occurred; whether the Chief Constable of the county attributed the maintenance of order to the fact that he attended the distraints in each case unaccompanied with any police other than the local policeman, and that he exhorted the people in the Welsh language to preserve order; whether he was aware that the crowds gave cheers for and thanks to the Chief Constable for coming without a police force and for talking to them in Welsh; and whether he would recommend this precedent to the police authorities of Cardiganshire?

MR. STUART WORTLEY: The Secretary of State is informed by the Chief Constable of Carnarvonshire that upon three occasions during the months of December and January last sales for tithes were effected in the three first-named parishes in Carnarvonshire. In the fourth parish a settlement was made, and no sales took place. On each occasion a considerable crowd was present. The Chief Constable was present with one or two local policemen, and no serious disturbance took place. The Chief Constable attributes this to the absence of any large body of police, combined with the cordial support which he received from the farmers distrained upon, and from other persons present who had influence with the people, and also to the good-tempered demeanour of the gentleman who acted as auctioneer. The fact of his speaking Welsh also had the effect of making the people more ready to comply with any request he made. The Secretary of State has already stated to the House the steps taken by him with the view of recommending precedents of this kind to the Magistrates and police authorities in Cardiganshire.

THE ARMENIAN CHRISTIANS IN ASIATIC TURKEY.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government had been called to the accounts constantly appearing in the European newspapers of the oppressions perpetrated on the Armenian Christians in Asiatic Turkey by Turkish officials, and in particular to the reports from various parts of Armenia, published in the journal *Haiasdan* of 1st and 15th February, 1889; whether Her Majesty's Government is taking or will take measures to inform themselves as to the condition of Asiatic Turkey and the sufferings endured by the Christian population there; when papers containing the reports received from the Consuls in Asiatic Turkey during the last seven years (in continuation of the Blue Book of 1882) will be laid before Parliament; and whether Her Majesty's Government, having regard to the duty undertaken by them in the so-called Anglo-Turkish Convention, and in the sixty-first article of the Treaty of Berlin, to secure the fulfilment of the promises then made by the Turkish Government to carry out administrative reform in Armenia and Asia Minor, and protect the Armenian Christians from the Kurds and Circassians, will, if convinced that these promises remain wholly unfulfilled, remonstrate with the Turkish Government and endeavour to secure their fulfilment?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: In reply to the hon. Member, I beg to say that the Foreign Office are not in possession of the particular number of the *Haiaisdan* mentioned. Sir W. White constantly makes use of such means of information as are in his power to obtain authentic information of the condition of the Christian population in Asiatic Turkey, and the general result is to show that the reports which appear in the newspapers, though, unhappily, not always unfounded, are, at all events, greatly exaggerated in many instances. As the hon. Gentleman will remember, it was decided when the late Government was in office that the publication of these papers was undesirable in the interests of the Armenians themselves; and Her Majesty's Government have found, by experience, that their representations in favour of administrative reform, if they produce any effect, it is of a contrary nature to that which they desire. They, therefore, consider that it is undesirable to address any formal and general representation on the subject to the Porte without the concurrence of the other Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin, but Her Majesty's Ambassador will continue, as heretofore, to represent to the Sultan and to His Majesty's Ministers unofficially any individual cases of hardship and oppression of which he may receive well-established evidence.

Mr. BRYCE: I should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that some years have elapsed since any Reports were received. In consequence of the extremely unsatisfactory nature of the reply and of previous replies which I have received, and the non-publication of any Report for seven years, I shall take the first opportunity of calling attention to the subject and to the tactics of Her Majesty's Government.

ARMY CONTRACTS.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked whether attention had been drawn to the recent rejection of a tender for Army boots made by the Finedon Co-operative Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Company; whether he is aware that the tender was at a higher price than the previous tenders of the Company; that this higher price was fixed by the Committee, acting on the advice of the then manager and secretary, and that the manager and secretary made a separate tender on their own account at a lower price and obtained the contract; and whether the manager and secretary obtained the contract by representations which fully and truthfully complied with the conditions on which such contracts are issued; and, if not, whether he will direct the contract to be cancelled, and permit the Company to send in an amended tender?

Mr. BRODRICK: I cannot go into the proceedings between the Finedon Co-operative Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Company and their secretary and manager; but it is evident that the latter obtained a recent contract for Army boots through representations to the Director of Army Contracts, since proved to be misleading, and their names will be struck off the list of contractors. Legal advice will be taken as to whether the present contract (which is a very small one) can be cancelled. Arrangements have been made to give employment to the Finedon and other co-operative societies in Northamptonshire at the average price of the last competition.

THE CARDIFF SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. HOWELL asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention had been called to a notice issued by the official liquidator of the Cardiff Savings Bank, requiring the irregular depositors "to come in and prove the debt claimed, by filing an affidavit," and to attend by solicitor at the High Court of Justice in London on 10th April; whether he was aware that the deposit books, which are in themselves *bonâ fide* evidence of the claims of depositors, are in the hands of the official liquidator, or of the representative of the bank; and whether, having regard to the fact that these depositors were poor persons, some other mode of proof of claim could be arranged, so that those poor people shall not be deprived of their lawful dues?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. G. J. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): My attention has been called to the notice in question, but I must once more remind the hon. Member that I have no right and no power to interfere with the course of the liquidation or the mode of proof which the Court considers necessary. The procedure laid down by the Act must be followed, and the directions of the Court in carrying out that Act must be obeyed. The liquidator has addressed a letter to the irregular depositors pointing out the method by which their claim might be presented to the Court at small cost to each individual. The liquidator is ready to give any information in his power to the depositors, and it would be more advantageous to the depositors and their friends to apply for information to him than to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The fact that some of the deposit books (there are others which cannot be traced) are in the liquidator's hands will not invalidate the evidence which those books afford of the amount of the deposits.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware of the expense and trouble the depositors in the late Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank are being put to in order to prove their claims; whether the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt are taking any steps to carry out the recommendation of Mr. Lyulph Stanley, the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank, as given on page 63 of his Report; whether he can state the amount by which, according to the Commissioner, the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt—

> "Have been defrauded by the trustees, both by the loss of forfeitures resulting from the omission to enforce signed declarations, and by the large sums invested and drawing interest in excess of the sums the trustees were entitled to invest, and to whom yearly false statements have been returned by the trustees and managers;"

and whether, seeing that these yearly false statements were returned through carelessness, and placing too much confidence in their actuary, and not wilfully, he is prepared to advise the National Debt Commissioners to forego their claim, provided that the trustees and managers pay all claims of depositors in full?

*MR. GOSCHEN said: The recommendation of Mr. Lyulph Stanley was that a Petition should be presented by the National Debt Commissioners for the winding up of the bank under the Companies Act. This has long since been done. I cannot state the exact amount of the claims of the National Debt Commissioners against the bank, but I am inclined to think that if the trustees and managers were now, without further delay, to make good to all the depositors the unpaid balance of their deposits, these claims might reasonably be waived.

CAPTAIN SEGRAVE, R.M.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he would have any objection to lay upon the Table of the House a list of the persons convicted by Captain Segrave, R.M., in Courts constituted under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, and the charges alleged against them, and the punishments inflicted?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): It would be contrary to precedent to lay upon the Table a list of persons convicted by any particular magistrate or magistrates. I would, however, point out, as regards the case in question, that in no instance did Mr. Segrave alone convict any persons in Courts constituted under the Criminal Law and Procedure Act, such Courts necessarily consisting of two Resident Magistrates. Mr. Segrave was always the junior member of these Courts, as he was not one of the Resident Magistrates declared to be legally qualified in regard thereto within the meaning of the Act.

MR. MAC NEILL: Under the Crimes Act it requires two magistrates to conduct an inquiry.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is so.

MR. MAC NEILL: At what date was Captain Segrave suspended in the exercise of his office of Resident Magistrate; and at what date was his salary stopped?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Mr. Segrave was suspended on the 20th instant.

MR. MAC NEILL: On what date was his salary stopped?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: On the same date, of course.

MR. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): In view of the fact that the House will be required to pay for the shorthand notes taken at the Special Commission, will the First Lord of the Treasury have a copy of the notes placed in the Library for the use of Members?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I will communicate with the Secretary to the Commission. If there is no objection on the part of the Commission, an arrangement such as the right hon. Gentleman desires shall be made.

IRELAND—INQUIRY INTO TREATMENT OF PRISONERS UNDER THE CRIMES ACT.

MR. SEXTON: May I ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether it is convenient for him to say now what progress he has made with the inquiry which he promised on the Second Reading of the Prisoners' (Ireland) Bill, in reference to the treatment of prisoners under the Coercion Act?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no hesitation in stating that I have had a more or less informal communication with representatives of the Irish, Scotch, and English Prisons Boards; and I am inclined to think that the best plan will be to ask them to serve on the Committee, and to add two other persons who will have the confidence of the public, to make a report with regard to certain views I expressed on Wednesday week.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman be able to communicate to the House the terms of the Instruction to the Committee?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think so; I will consider that point.

Mr. CLANCY: Will Mr. Burke, the Chairman of the Prisons Board, be a Member of that Committee?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: He will, of course.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Will evidence be taken?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Oh, that, of course, will depend on the Committee.

THE EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. A. ACLAND (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham): I should like to inquire from the Vice President of the Committee of Council whether the Government are prepared to issue a memorandum to accompany the new Code, with the view of making clear those changes which are likely to take place, and indicating the probable instructions to inspectors which will result from the Code?

Sir W. HART DYKE: I shall be glad to do anything which will facilitate the passing of the Code. The hon. Member's question is not one which I can be expected to answer off-hand. I think, however, it is one well worthy of consideration.

MOTIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (CONTINUATION SCHOOLS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Samuel Smith, Bill to amend the Elementary Education Acts, and to provide Continuation Schools, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Samuel Smith, Sir Henry Roscoe, Sir John Lubbock, Sir George Baden-Powell, Sir John Puleston, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Cyril Flower, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Picton, Mr. James William Lowther, and Mr. Howell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 171.]

SOLICITORS (MAGISTRACY) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Maclure, Bill to enable practising Solicitors of the High Court of Justice to act as Justices in the County where they practise, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Maclure, Sir Albert Rollit, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 172.]

RAILWAY SHAREHOLDERS (LICENSING SESSIONS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Maclure, Bill to relieve Shareholders in Railway and other Companies from the disqualification penalties for acting as Justices at Licensing Sessions, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Maclure, Mr. Hermon-Hodge, Mr. Fielden, and Mr. Grotrian.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 173.]

VAGRANT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Anderson, Bill to amend the Act of the fifth year of George the Fourth, chapter eighty-three, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Addison, Mr. Gully, Sir William Houldsworth, and Mr. Hubbard.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 174.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

THIRD READING.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): Before the Bill is read a third time I should like to ask a question which, perhaps, the Chancellor of the Exchequer may think illustrates my financial simplicity. Still, every Member of the House has a right to understand these things, if possible, and, therefore, I should like to be instructed why sums applied out of the Consolidated Fund for three years are mixed up together in this Bill? There is just one other observation I should like to make. I think the style of the preamble of Bills like this is extremely old-fashioned and entirely anachronistic, and I wish Gentlemen in framing such Bills in the future will consider whether they cannot adapt the language of the preamble to the actual needs of the day in which we live. Of course we know it is merely fiction when we talk of humbly beseeching Her Majesty to accept this willing offering from Her Commons. We know that the money is intended to go towards the services of the country, and that this language comes down from a day when very different ideas were entertained as to the relations between the Parliament and the Sovereign from those entertained at the present day. I know the Chancellor of the Exchequer will regard this as a very trivial matter—a mere matter of form; but the more the democracy of this country take an interest in the work of the House of Commons, the more offensive does this language of fulsome servility become to them. People do not like to hear the Sovereign talked about as though the Crown were elevated into some supernatural region. The people desire to approach the Crown with due respect, but not with the flattering and servile language of former days. Besides, the ignorant people—and of course there are ignorant people everywhere—are led to think by this form of language that the money is actually given to the Sovereign for her own purposes. We ought to guard against misunderstanding even on the part of the most humble of our citizens. I, therefore, hope that the Government will consider whether the time has not come when the language of the preamble of these Bills cannot be adapted to the opinions and social life of the present day, rather than to the opinions and social life of the twelfth or fourteenth century.

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson): I will endeavour to explain to the hon. Member why sums relating to three years appear in this Bill. The first item which relates to the financial year ending the 31st March, 1888, is due to the fact that the amount expended for certain Services during that year exceeded the amount which had been voted and sanctioned by Parliament for those particular Services. The next amount relates to the Supplementary Estimates which were necessary to provide for the Services of the year ending the 31st March, 1889, and the third item relates to the Supply which is necessary to provide for the financial year, ending 31st March, 1890.

Question put, and agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 2) BILL.

Bill read a second time.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): Mr. Speaker, I rise to move as an Amendment the Motion which stands in my name, namely:—

> "That the growing system of Trusts and Syndicates to raise by combination and conspiracy the cost of articles of common consumption requires the immediate and serious attention of Her Majesty's Government and of Parliament."

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. That has no reference to the Civil Service Estimates.

Question put, and agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES.

Supply—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class I.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £29,238, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Maintenance and Repair of Royal Palaces."

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £1,833. I have frequently objected to this Vote and I will explain why. When the Civil List was arranged, these establishments were set apart for Her Majesty's use, but now we find that they are inhabited by a few private individuals, who, therefore, derive very considerable benefit. I do not want to make this a personal matter, but they are given away, and given away generally to people of no very great eminence. We have not only given the houses, but we are called upon every year to spend large sums upon their maintenance. I contend that the least these people should be required to do is, what we have to do when we take a house on lease—namely, to keep the house in repair. I will give two instances. I see that upon the Hampton Court Stud House £400 is spent on maintenance and repairs, and £5 for furniture; it appears we have also to provide furniture. The Committee will see that £415 was spent last year. As a mere matter of speculation, I would take the house gratis and willingly keep it in repair. It is a house situated near London, and anyone would be willing to keep it in repair for the pleasure of living in it. Then, again, in respect of Kew Palace and buildings, £470 has been spent on maintenance and repair, £10 for furniture and for fuel, lighting, &c.; in all £710. Last year we spent upon this establishment £758. The peculiarity of this house at Kew is, that no one lives in it, except perhaps a servant and a cat or two. I really think this expenditure ought to stop. We ought to pull down the house if we can do nothing with it, and thus save this expenditure. There are in addition, Hawthorn Cottage, Bushey House, and all the others. We ought either to sell them or pull them down, or let them; or if we do neither of these things, at least, when these houses are given away, we ought not to be called upon to pay for their repair.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £27,405, be granted for the said Service.—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): The hon. Gentleman has referred in particular to two houses—namely, the Hampton Court Stud House and Kew Palace, and therefore I need not go into the particulars concerning the other houses.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I only gave them as examples.

*MR. PLUNKET: I understood he only mentioned them as illustrations. His suggestion was that these houses ought to be pulled down or sold, or else the people inhabiting them should be required to pay for their maintenance and repair. In the first place, I wish to explain to the Committee what it is exactly we do. We have nothing to do with the furnishing of these houses, or with any expense except the bare maintenance of the structures; we have to see that the structures are in proper repair. I think I can satisfy the Committee in a very short time that this is really a matter in which we have no option whatever. These houses are what may be called the Royal houses of the Sovereign. Her Majesty has the right either to occupy them herself at any time or to give leave to certain persons to inhabit them, and that has always been in the power of the Sovereign. Up to the accession of William IV., in 1830, these expenses were defrayed out of the Civil List, which was voted to the Sovereign for this and other purposes. The Committee will remember that prior to 1830 there had been an agitation in favour of transferring certain charges payable on the Civil List to the Estimates. That agitation was led by Mr. Brougham and was continued for some time. On the accession of William IV. an opportunity arose for a revision of the Civil List. A very strong Committee was appointed by the House. It went very fully into the charges on the Civil List during the preceeding reign, and made various recommendations. Amongst those recommendations was one to the effect that such charges as those now under consideration, which had theretofore been part of the expenses of the Board or Office of Works, and as such defrayed out of the Civil List, should be transferred to the Estimates. That suggestion was adopted by the Parliament of that time. On the other hand, following up the recommendations of that Committee, the Civil List was considerably reduced—reduced by almost one-half. The arrangement was reconsidered on the accession of Her present Gracious Majesty. The Committee appointed on that occasion was again a very strong one, consisting, as it did amongst others, of Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Grote. They took into their consideration the arrangement which had been made in 1830, and they reported that the arrangement then made had been entirely satisfactory, had led to economy, and should be renewed. The arrangement was renewed, and, therefore—so far as my office is concerned—all these Royal Houses are included amongst the other public buildings and palaces, the expenses of maintaining and repairing which are to be provided for in the Estimates. In fact, Parliament—acting on the Report of a Committee of this House—thought fit to reduce very largely the Civil List out of which the repairs of these Royal Palaces had been defrayed—in consideration of which Parliament undertook that these expenses should in future be thrown on the Votes.

MR. H. GARDNER (Saffron Walden, Essex): I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say, in regard to the palaces not in the occupation of the Sovereign, no money was to be charged for furniture. I find in the Estimates for Kensington Palace a charge of that kind of £100, in those for Hampton Court Palace a charge for £300, and for Kew Palace £110, making a total of over £500. Therefore, I should like to have an explanation of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. PICTON: It seems to me that in justifying any extravagance which is pointed out, those who defend it on the part of the Government are like the doctors, who, when they can show how a disease originated, are as proud as though they had cured it. In the history of this country, and in the gradual modification of its Constitution, many abuses have grown up, some of which, though trivial in themselves, are very irritating to the popular mind. I am exceedingly sorry that the Treasury Bench is not alive to the importance of securing on a firm foundation a rational attachment to the Throne. It must be well known to hon. Members who have come into general contact with their own constituents—not of one party alone, but of all—that those who are newest to political life are most sensitive in regard to charges for the maintenance of the Royal establishments. I can give an illustration of this from my own experience. Having occasion to address my own constituents on the work of the House during the past year, I had to refer to the various ways in which the national money is spent, and I remember that a very innocent illustration I used led to a perfect storm of disapprobation with regard to the money voted for the Royal establishments. In coming away from the meeting I was overtaken by one of the audience—a plain working man—to whom I said, in reply to the objections he had urged, "Really, I am shocked! I did not know that you were such Republicans down here." "Ah," said he, "but we are." "But," I rejoined, "surely you do not object to pay the hereditary President of your Commonwealth?" "Well," replied the man, "we are content to leave that to you." But he would not hear of any other Royal endowment. That is an illustration of what is thought of the little extravagances which we regard as so trivial, but which seem so greatly to irritate the minds of the people on whom the future of the country will depend; and I say that, unless means are taken to obviate these objections, within an easily measurable distance of time, some future Government will find itself in difficulties it will be almost impossible to surmount without a very grave change. With regard to the Royal Palaces I will only take those in the occupation of Her Majesty and Marlborough House, for which we are called on to expend £36,178, and this I will compare with the sum charged for the Science and Art Department buildings and British Museum buildings—namely, £21,027. Now, it will be made a matter of complaint in the country that while we only spend £21,027 for Science and Art buildings we are called on to expend £36,178 on our Royal Palaces, many of which are absolutely useless to Royalty. The people will think that their representatives do not pay sufficient attention to their interests. If their anger were directed only against their representatives it would be of little consequence; but it may be directed elsewhere against the Constitution of the country. They fret and fume against the traditions under which we have lived, and unless some change is made a dangerous temper may spring up. Therefore, I most heartily support the Amendment of my hon. Friend.

MR. HANBURY-TRACY (Montgomery): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works, by whom we are met with the statement that we have not the power of altering certain things in relation to this Vote, whether he will tell us what it is we have the power to alter?

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): At the commencement of nearly every Session we hear a statement as to the bargain that has been made at the beginning of each reign, which shocks my sentiments of historic accuracy. To-day the right hon. Gentleman has been more specific, but I think there has been some variation from, or misconception with reference to, the facts in connection with this matter. I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that at the commencement of the reign of William the Fourth a large reduction was made in the Civil List, and that that reduction was still further continued at the commencement of the present reign. If the right hon. Gentleman means that sums which used to be contained in the Civil List were taken out of it, and that a nominal reduction was made by so doing, I am ready to agree with him; but if he means that any real saving has thereby been effected to the country I take leave to suggest that he has entirely misapprehended the facts; because at the present moment the total of the amounts voted on account of the Royal Family, or charged on the Consolidated Fund, is larger than the whole Civil List of William IV. at the commencement of his reign, although that included a large number of items which either fall now on the Consolidated Fund or are voted in the Estimates. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman does justice to himself or the Committee when he uses the word "reduced" instead of "increased." The truth is that the cost of Royalty has been continually increasing in this country. The objection has always been that it is not fair to the country that Estimates should be so brought forward, especially at a time when, owing largely to the efforts of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill), so great an improvement is being made in those for the Army and Navy, as to leave the public in the dark with regard to those that are presented in respect to the Civil Service. Moreover, it is a matter of complaint when you lead them to believe that these Estimates are less than they were before, whereas a larger sum is now paid than was ever known since 1688, with a slight exception during the extravagant reign of George III. I am prepared by figures to prove that you are wrong in saying that the cost of Royalty is reduced. The only reason for my not now going fully into the matter is that I remember on a previous occasion I was prevented from discussing the subject of the gross cost of the Royal Family on this Vote. I should not have alluded to it now, only that the word "reduced" came upon me as a shock to my reason, and I felt bound to protest against it. It is not, in point of figures, true that there has been any reduction at all, except a very nominal reduction, by taking items out of the Civil List or putting them on to the Votes or the Consolidated Fund; but the actual cost is heavier now than it ever was before, possibly for reasons quite independent of this Vote now under discussion. The cost of Royalty is larger now than when these sums were included in the Civil List.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I do not follow the hon. Member into a discussion which, as the hon. Member himself has suggested, is, perhaps, hardly germane to the Vote now before the Committee. With regard to these Palaces, there has been a considerable reduction in the expenditure upon them. So far as the hon. Member refers to the removal of certain other items, not included in this Vote, from the Civil List, I am not prepared with the materials to go into that part of the subject; but, so far as this Vote is concerned, I can confidently say that several thousands of pounds have been saved by this operation. I think that is an answer also to my hon. Friend opposite, who asked whether Parliament has any control over these matters. Parliament clearly has control over those matters, so far as the economical administration of the work agreed to be done is concerned. An hon. Member asked what was the meaning of the charge for furniture at Hampton Court, Kensington, and St. James's. There is no expense for furnishing the rooms in those Palaces for "grace and favour" occupants. The cost for furniture is mainly in connection with pictures and tapestry at Hampton; in the case of St James's, for the State Rooms, which are used for public functions; and in the instance of Kensington Palace, the cost is incurred for the rooms of an official employed to look after the entire building.

*Sir J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I should like the right hon. Gentleman to consider what is the evidence with regard to Kew Palace. Looking at it from a practical point of view, we spend £700 a year on the Palace, which is empty, and has never been occupied for upwards of 60 years, and which the Government have no power to let or to sell, or make any use of, being prevented by a bargain which they made fifty or sixty years ago. I think no good will come of this Palace, which costs us £700 a-year, until Parliament refuses to vote the money, and the sooner we come to that point the better. It is perfectly monstrous to go on spending £700 a-year upon a building which the Government are unable to sell, but must keep in repair. If we turn to the total amount spent on Palaces not in the occupation of Her Majesty, we find that it is £18,000 a-year. I do hope that—either by the Government bringing in a Bill, or by some other means—an effort will be made to render useful that which is now useless.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (East Finsbury): Mr. Courtney, I support the Amendment of my hon. Friend, not because I think of the mere temporary reduction which is moved, but because I think the time has come when an entirely new departure should be made with regard to these buildings. If they can be devoted to the good of the whole community, then I am prepared to support any proposition for their being utilized in this manner; but if they cannot be so utilized, but must be used as wards for a species of indoor relief for certain persons of the upper grades of society, then I think we ought to refuse to vote the money for the maintenance of the structures, for, under such circumstances, the sooner they fall to pieces the better for the community. I have been looking at some of the figures, and it is surprising what an amount it takes every year to keep these buildings in repair. I do not know exactly what they are built of; but it seems a wonderful thing that in some instances we should have had to vote £400 and £500 a year for structural alterations, for we have it from the First Commissioner of Works that none of the money is applied to making the occupants of the buildings comfortable by purchasing furniture, and so forth. My only object in rising is to urge upon the Government the necessity of bringing what might have been suited to the requirements of 60 years ago into accordance with the wishes of the people at the present time, and the sooner the Government entirely remedy this system of having Palaces not occupied by Royalty, but by persons nominated by Royalty, the better it will be for the country.

***Sir GEORGE TREVELYAN** (Bridgeton, Glasgow): I think the hon. Member who has just spoken has put the case admirably. The great palaces occupied by Her Majesty undoubtedly ought to be kept up, and kept up well, by the nation. But it is another matter altogether when we come to those houses which are given for occupation by favour. In Hampton Court a considerable number of the dwellings go to men, and the relations of men, who have served the country both in their military capacity and as civilians. To those I have no objection at all, but in a very large number of instances these rooms are given to persons who have no claim upon the country whatever, and, in fact, in some cases to less than a claim upon the country, because of the earlier parts of their own career, or by their relatives having received public money and done very little for it. Now, if Her Majesty graciously gives these lodgings to persons, I must say that I do not see why the nation should give anything more than the bare house. If we look at the Vote, we find that the reduction of £1,853 is contained very well within the class of expenses which fall upon all who live in their own houses, and which ought to fall upon those fortunate people who live in houses rent free, and not upon the country. I hope the Government will be encouraged to make an examination of this subject, and recommend that these houses should be given only to persons who deserve well of the country, and I must say that when they have those public lodging houses they should then be in the same position as people who have houses in the country, and should themselves maintain the buildings. In voting for the reduction, I do not wish it to be understood that we ought to keep up the Palaces which Her Majesty occupies during her lifetime, and long may that last.

***Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON** (Leith): It is difficult to recognize Buckingham Palace under the name of the great Reception House of the Nation, and it might very properly be called the deserted Palace and Gardens. I would venture to point out that the cost of maintenance of the Palaces not occupied by Her Majesty is larger than the cost incurred for the Palaces which Her Majesty occupies. The rooms which are occupied at Hampton by the favour of the Sovereign are not altogether advantageous, because last year the whole Palace was nearly lost by a fire having arisen in one of the rooms so lent.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I almost wish, as a matter of fact, that we had never had any ancestors at all, for a more stupid set of people never existed. If there is ever any permanent folly it is our ancestors who have pledged us to it. But I am not going to accept *post obits* drawn upon me by my ancestors. When a Vote is on the Estimates, we claim the right to discuss it, or why is it submitted to this House? We are asked to vote the money, and that implies necessarily that we may decline to vote it. The right hon. Gentleman has not told me who lives in Kew Palace. I believe, as far as ever I have been able to gather, nobody does live there. It costs us £700 a year. Her Majesty has been on the Throne 52 years, so that the Palace has cost us during her reign £36,400. I have mentioned Hampton Court Stud House. That has been given to a gentleman who is highly respectable, but in no way eminent for his services to the country. Take the fifty-two years that that gentleman and his predecessors have occupied it, and it will be found that the House has cost us £28,000. Is it not time that a stop should be put to this sort of thing? Putting aside the question of the original bargain, I say there is not the slightest doubt that if this House were to refuse to grant money in future for the repair of this building, Her Majesty would assent to the fair and reasonable condition that the tenant should maintain the repairs in the future. I am not asking that the house should be pulled down; what I submit is that it should not cost us anything for repairs. Before we part with this Vote, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman a question about Hampton Court. I sometimes go there, when I am inclined, to look at Sir Peter Lely's pictures of Charles the Second's ladies. I find there is generally a crowd there trying to see them. Now, there are some railings stretched across the room where the pictures are, so that you cannot get to see them properly. I inquired why the railings were there, and was told it was because of a bed, which is the bed of the legitimate spouse of George the Third. Perhaps I ought to admire this bed more than I do the ladies; but there is nothing artistic in the bed, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will order the apparatus to be taken away and thus give the public an opportunity of seeing the pictures of Sir Peter Lely.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: The Secretary to the Treasury promised that the Government would consider whether it was possible to issue with the estimate an additional memorandum showing the total items, including the Civil List and the charges on the Consolidated Fund, in connection with the Royal Family. Have the Government considered that point; and why is there no such memorandum?

*MR. PLUNKET: As to the existence of any such undertaking, I cannot answer in the absence of my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury. I have no knowledge of it; but I will consult with him and communicate the result to the hon. Member opposite. As regards the railings round Sir Peter Lely's pictures, I will imitate the example of the hon. Member and study the geography of the room, and if I find they are a source of inconvenience to myself, I will see whether anything can be done to remedy it.

*MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): The question before the Committee has been so amply discussed by many hon. Members opposite, it may perhaps be of some advantage to know the view which is taken by myself and those sitting near me; and, although on some grounds I might have supported the Amendment, yet, on those advanced by the hon. Member, I am unable to do so. With regard to the Royal Palaces which are necessary for the use of Her Majesty, and the Royal Family, I think it is incumbent on the nation to contribute most liberally to their maintenance. But in regard to Kew Palace I think there is some cause for complaint. I believe this Palace is of no earthly use to anybody, and it does appear to me that if we vote £700 per annum towards that edifice it should be devoted to the use of the public in some form or other. I heartily concur, therefore, in the suggestion that the time has come when there should be some inquiry into this matter; and, although I shall not vote for the Amendment for the reason that I do not concur in the form in which it has been brought forward, I wish it to be understood that had the hon. Member made it refer directly to the Vote for Kew Palace I should have gone into the Lobby with him.

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): Ever since I have been in Parliament, when these matters have been discussed, the historical argument has always been advanced, whenever it is proposed to make additional grants to Members of the Royal Family, although we never hear of it when there is anything to be done in the way of reduction. If hon. Members of this House wish, as I do, to see loyalty more rife in this country, they must avoid such irritating circumstances as the having a number of palaces unused, kept up at the expense of the nation. We have a large amount of poverty in this country, and we are not justified in spending the people's money in the maintenance of palaces, unless they may be used for the public benefit. On the Continent the palaces are open to the public, and I claim that English palaces should be open to our public.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I wish to say a word on the subject of Kew Palace, which I believe is one of the most gloomy and most useless palaces ever heard of. Kew Gardens, on the other hand, are a very popular resort, but, unfortunately, the people who go there are allowed to have no refreshments in the Gardens, nor are they allowed to scatter sandwich papers about. I suggest that the Palace might be converted into a refreshment and lounging palace for the British public, and I think you would thereby be making most excellent use of the building.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): We have been assured by the right hon. Gentleman that the nation is only bound to maintain the fabric of the Royal palaces, and that we have nothing to do with the internal arrangements. If that is so, I wish to know how comes it that we find in this Estimate items relating to salaries, wages, and allowances in connection, say, with Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, and Kensington Palace? As far as Kensington Palace is concerned, I do not believe that I have ever been able to gain admission there, because the whole of it is practically devoted to the Royal and aristocratic lodgers, to whom it is given up. I think we have a right to demand to know exactly why these items are charged against us. For instance, there is for insurance, tithe charges, firing, household expenses, &c., a charge of £1,008 for Windsor Castle, and £1,238 for Hampton Court Palace, and there is nothing to show exactly how these sums are made up. I think that the ladies and gentlemen whom the Queen allows to occupy the public palaces ought to pay for their own fuel, light, water, and household articles; and I see no reason, too, why they should not pay for insurance and tithe rent charge. Again, I should like to know how many of these palaces were in existence at the time the so-called historical bargain was entered into. With regard to the fire at Hampton Court Palace, I see there is a considerable charge for restoration of part of the building. Now, I am not going to object——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That point does not arise out of this Estimate.

MR. CONYBEARE: I may have been mistaken, Sir, but I was under the impression it did. I will not, of course, after your ruling, refer to it further. I only wish now to ask the right hon. Gentleman to explain the matters to which I have drawn attention. I endorse entirely what has been said by my hon. Friend as to the injurious effect upon the popularity of the Royal Family which is produced in the public mind by the taxpayers being called upon constantly to pay large sums of money for their benefit, and for the maintenance of palaces which are not occupied by the Royal Family. Of course, I cannot object to this feeling, because I think it tends to the gradual introduction into the British mind of the appreciation of the superiority of Republican over Monarchical institutions, but I would suggest that those who support the present *régime* should do all that is in their power to secure the removal of these items from the Estimates, and the abolition consequently of these causes of complaint.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.): I intend, Sir, to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend, mainly on the ground that there is no explanation of several of the large items which appear in the Estimates. I wish to know, too, under what circumstances the repairs are carried out at these Royal palaces. Is the work handed over to private firms, or are tenders invited and the contracts given to the lowest tenderer? I fear that the officials take it for granted that a certain amount of money is to be spent every year upon these palaces, and they do their best to get rid of it without studying the interests of the taxpayer.

*MR. PLUNKET: In answer to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who spoke last, I may assure him that the question of these repairs is the subject of very careful consideration. The arrangement is to place them in the hands of certain firms, under contracts according to specified scales of charges, for general repairs, as it would be almost impossible to invite tenders for the many small jobs which require to be done, but when there were new works or alterations to a large extent to be carried out, then tenders might be invited.

DR. TANNER: When the days get longer would it not be possible to extend the hours during which people from London can see the pictures at Hampton Court? And could not permission be given to such visitors to take bundles of sandwiches into the building and the grounds?

MR. CREMER: With regard to the firms of contractors, would the right hon. Gentleman state the names of those with whom contracts were last made and the facts as to the extent of the contracts?

*MR. PLUNKET: I will ascertain the names of the firms referred to and let the hon. Gentleman know. As to the suggestion of the hon. Member for Mid Cork, I may at once say that we have already established a refreshment room at Kew Gardens, and will consider whether the system can be extended in the case of Hampton Court.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 106, Noes 208.—(Div. List, No. 42.)

DR. TANNER: Do the tenants of the refreshment kiosks pay a fair rent?

*MR. PLUNKET replied in the affirmative.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £1,340, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Maintenance and Repair of Marlborough House."

*MR. PICTON: I think it necessary to move the reduction of this Vote by £150; sub-head "A," new works, alterations, and additions. The details of this Vote show that £100 is for the extension of partitions in the stables, and £50 for works and alterations of a minor character. Now, without going into the question whether the maintenance and repair of this Royal Palace ought to be paid by the illustrious occupier thereof, I must say I think it will be contrary to the will, as it is certainly inconsistent with the well-known disposition of the Prince of Wales, that such paltry sums as these should be charged on the Estimates. When we call to mind what a large proportion of our incomes many of us have to pay for rent and repairs, and what a still larger proportion of their incomes labouring people have to pay for rates and taxes, I do think that it is adding insult to injury to ask the over-burdened taxpayers of the country to defray paltry expenses of this kind. It is well known that ample provision is made from various sources to provide for the illustrious occupant of Marlborough House, and it cannot be said for a moment that it is necessary to relieve him of minor expenses of this kind. I think it is doing him wrong, and doing wrong to the Royal Family of this country, and treating the poor of this country with a very scant amount of consideration, not so much as regards their pockets as their feelings, to thrust a claim of this kind on the representatives of the people. I therefore beg to move that the Vote be reduced by the sum of £150.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That item A, £150, for new works, be omitted from the proposed Vote."—(*Mr. Picton.*)

*MR. PLUNKET: It is in strict accordance with the settled practice that structural alterations of this kind shall be borne upon the Estimates. In August, 1878, Her Majesty's Government decided that, in consideration of the large expenditure already incurred by His Royal Highness in improving the house—he had, I believe, spent more than £50,000 from his own purse for new works and repairs, besides the cost of decorating—it should thenceforth be placed on the same footing as Clarence House, and, accordingly, that the cost of ordinary maintenance and repairs, external and internal, including painting, papering, and whitewashing, should be annually provided for in the Estimates.

MR. MOLLOY (King's Co., Birr): Some two or three years ago there was a discussion in Committee on this item, in the course of which it was understood that an arrangement was come to that such items should not again appear upon the Estimates. It seems that the item of £100, to which attention has been called, is for enlarging the stalls for the big horses of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The charge seems to me a mean one; and I am surprised that, in the interest of H.R.H. himself, it has not been kept off the Estimates. I must say that, if I had the control of the Estimates, I should certainly endeavour to disguise such an item as this; indeed, I would never put it in if I had no better excuse to offer for it than that it was to enlarge the stalls for the big horses of the Prince of Wales. I shall vote for the reduction moved by my hon. Friend; and, I hope it will be clearly understood that putting such items as this in the Estimates is doing a deal of harm to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales in the estimation of the people of the country. Instead of doing good, these miserable little charges are building up in the minds of the people a store of feeling which we should deplore as prejudicial to the popularity of the Prince of Wales and the Royal Family.

*MR. PLUNKET: I must say I have no knowledge of any arrangement such as that mentioned by the hon. Gentleman. I have made inquiries of the Secretary to the Treasury, and he also is unaware of any such understanding; but I will make further inquiries into the matter.

The Committee divided. :—Ayes 93; Noes 221.—(Div. List, No. 43.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): A remark fell from the Commissioner of Works just now that needs a little explanation. He defended the Vote on the ground that it was within the terms of a certain agreement which he said was made some years ago between H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and another party, but he did not say whom.

*MR. PLUNKET: The Treasury.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Well, we have heard so much of mythical agreements as foundation for Votes of this kind that I confess I am a little—and I think justifiably—sceptical about such agreements. I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman to tell us all about it—the date when it was made, the particulars of the agreement, and what was the consideration on the other side of the agreement, which, as I understand it, commits the country to this unknown expenditure. For my part, I am unwilling to vote another farthing until we get the whole story. I will go further, and say that each Vote for Marlborough House is one of a series against which the House would do well to put its foot down. Part of these amounts granted to the Royal Family is founded on Statute, but part also is founded on such mythical agreements as that which has been referred to. So far as the expenditure is provided for by Statute—so far as it depends on the Civil List Act—I am aware this House is powerless, and the money must be voted; but we are entitled to know all about the distribution of these parts. The whole administration of the Civil List Act is shrouded in mystery. I am not going into that for the moment; but until our legitimate demands for information as to the expenditure are met, I am not willing to sanction a farthing of these Estimates. I would ask the First Commissioner now to tell us all about this special agreement which, he says, justified this special Vote. Further, though I do not expect a full answer now, I would ask him to hold out a hope that the Government will make a clean breast of the whole financial position of the House in regard to His Royal Highness, and unless he can do that I must object to the Vote.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that we are entitled to information; but at the same time I must confess it would be a most invidious thing for the House of Commons to undertake the checking of the accounts of tradesmen for the whitewashing and other incidental items for the repair of Marlborough House. Yet it is a matter that calls for some explanation that an item which last year appeared as £390 should this year have risen to £780. The present arrangement seems to me to be in the highest degree unsatisfactory. It is admitted that His Royal Highness undertakes to provide fittings for Marlborough House; but it is difficult sometimes to draw a distinction between fittings, alterations, and repairs. If it is the fact that we are under agreement to keep up the fabric, would it not be much better to make a bargain with His Royal Highness, and fix upon some sum that will represent the average cost of the items for which we are liable, say £1,000 a year, or something of that kind, so that we may not every year have to scrutinize the items under sub-head B? I notice another sum under head C, which is suspicious for its smallness — £10 for a water rate. Does that mean that Marlborough House is supplied with water for £10? It is a little surprising to us who have had experience of water rates.

*MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): With the idea of supporting what I hold to be the proper position of the Royal Family, I join in objecting to this Vote. I am of opinion that it is a detraction from the dignity of the Royal Family that they should come to the House for these paltry sums. Look, for instance, at this £10 for water rate! I would press on the Government the desirability of reconsidering this arrangement, and putting these matters on a more dignified footing. The right hon. Gentleman is alone on the Government Bench just now, and we cannot ask him to enter on such a negotiation upon his own responsibility; but I have no doubt we shall be talking upon this same subject again, and meantime he might consult with his colleagues. I yield to no man in loyalty; but it is because I dislike this petty dealing with such items that I support the objection to the Vote.

*MR. PLUNKET: I have only to say, in answer to the hon. Member who has just spoken, that the form in which the expenditure upon Marlborough House is presented in the Estimates is the form in which the House of Commons has seen fit to have it presented. I do not think it would be possible to present the expenditure *en bloc;* and from what we have heard it would appear that that would be likely to meet with some objection. The hon. Member for Dundee has talked about mystery and concealment; but there really is nothing of the kind. I will give him all the information in my power. In 1878 an arrangement was made between the Treasury and His Royal Highness, and this has been carried out since. That arrangement, as I have already said, was that, in consideration of the sum expended by His Royal Highness in improving Marlborough House, thenceforward the cost of repairs and maintenance should be borne upon the Estimates, putting it on the same footing as Clarence House. The expenditure on fittings and furniture is borne by His Royal Highness. That is the whole of the story, and there is no mystery about it. As to the £10 for water rate, that is a charge payable to the Chelsea Water Company for the privilege of a high service supply, to be availed of in case of fire.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Who pays the ordinary water rate?

MR. PLUNKET: His Royal Highness.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: And why not this?

MR. PLUNKET: Because it is for the protection of the house from fire.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the information, which, as I take it, comes to this: that in 1878 it was agreed that on consideration of the Prince of Wales spending a large sum upon a house he lives in himself, the Treasury bound the nation to an uncertain annual expenditure for maintenance and repairs, putting it on the same footing as another building the right hon. Gentleman called Clarence House. This *ignotum per ignotus,* I think, affords even more justification for objection to this expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman has said nothing about the larger question I referred to, which is the principal motive influencing me in the line I propose to take in reference to all these Royal Votes; I mean, the withholding from us information we are entitled to. I propose, therefore, to oppose the Vote.

MR. BRUNNER: I did not mean to suggest that the sum for this purpose should be set down as a lump sum without detail. I am perfectly willing that the House should grant sufficient to maintain the dignity of the position of His Royal Highness; but when that is done, do not let us have all these mean and trifling claims put forward.

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): I would like to ask whether there is any legal obligation on the part of the Treasury for the maintenance of Marlborough House? If there is, it must be of a vague character, for I notice the amount varies from year to year.

DR. TANNER: There can be no doubt in the world that the establishment of H.R.H. our future King should be maintained with dignity, but when we find such variations in the amounts submitted to us, it needs must challenge attention and comment, and then we do not get that amount of information we are entitled to ask for in Committee of Supply. I must say it appears to be a foolish method of submitting accounts to lump together an item of £780 for maintenance and repairs, leaving us no information as to why the item should be increased by £390 over the amount last year, and, on the other hand, to set out a small item like the £10 for water rate.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I think we ought to take note of the improvident nature of the arrangement entered into by a Conservative Government with H.R.H. in 1878. It appears that H.R.H., when he came of age, obtained Marlborough House for his residence while Prince of Wales, and during his term of residence he spent considerable sums upon adapting the house to his requirements. But that was a sort of *quid pro quo*. The country gave H.R.H. the house on that condition—he had what I may call a life repairing lease. Then a Conservative Government comes in, ready, as Conservative Governments always are, to throw away money in this way, and the bargain is upset. Why, what would be thought of a private individual who, having made an arrangement for a long term of years, by which he maintained the house he occupied, should after an interval come to the landlord and claim to be relieved from the conditions of his lease because he had already spent so much? Such a thing would be regarded as preposterous. Yet a Conservative Government entered into this corrupt bargain—for such it certainly was. And when we question the right hon. Gentleman, he says "my predecessor"—another Conservative—"entered into the bargain, and you are bound by it." We may be bound by it or not. I should say that we are not. At all events, it is our duty to call attention to this improvident habit of binding us to most improvident arrangements in regard to the Royal Family.

*MR. PLUNKET: While there is an increase for repairs, there is a considerable decrease on new works and alterations; and the reason of the increase is that the Estimates last year were cut down too far.

DR. TANNER: I think that these Estimates ought to be placed before the country without hesitation and without equivocation, so that we might know what is really required for maintenance and repairs, and what for new works, without telling us that a certain sum has been saved in one direction but that more has been expended in another. The amount for Marlborough House is only a small item, but if, in connection with such small items, important issues can be raised, how much greater issues can be raised in connection with such an item as the shipbuilding for the Navy? I have nothing to say against the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works, who always tries to put the best face upon matters, not only in regard to his own office, but with regard to the Government with which he is associated, and who invariably displays towards hon. Members the greatest courtesy on every occasion. I trust that in future the right hon. Gentleman will endeavour to prevent a reduction being shown on one item, while the Vote is being swelled on others. I am certain the right hon. Gentleman will agree with me that in all these matters honesty is the best policy.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I wish the right hon. Gentleman to explain whether the Committee is to believe that the Prince of Wales expended a sum of £50,000 upon Marlborough House in the year 1878.

*MR. PLUNKET: No, up to that time.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Then, when did this expenditure take place?

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question, may I ask him to consider the advisability of paying a regular fixed sum for keeping up Marlborough House, instead of having these constantly recurring items? I am sure it would be more convenient to his Royal Highness, and better for the Estimates of the year.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Are we to understand that up to that year his Royal Highness was bound to pay the expense out of his own pocket? The new arrangement has relieved him, I understand, of that responsibility. It is admitted that his Royal Highness is bound to pay the water rate, and it seems to be a dirty transaction that the Government are to put upon the nation the expense of carrying the water to a certain height to guard against fire.

*MR. PLUNKET: That is rather strong language. I have already explained the matter.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): The Vote we are asked to pass annually represents a capitalized sum of something like £75,000. It does not appear that this expenditure is required on behalf of His Royal Highness himself, but that the alterations and repairs are for the benefit of German visitors who come over here. It is a very humiliating thing that a palace built for Englishmen should be considered not good enough for these German sycophants.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman's language is exceedingly unbecoming, and it would be difficult to characterize his argument.

MR. BLANE: I was only intending to say that what is good enough for Englishmen does not appear to be good enough for foreigners. It occurs to me that we are called upon to vote large sums year after year for the benefit of a particular individual, and, as the house is given to him under a specific arrangement, I think he ought to be required to keep it in repair himself.

Original Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 245; Noes 85.—(Div. List, No. 44.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £78,395, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

*MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): This is a Vote which stands on a different footing from the last Vote, in reference to which I regret to state that, in consequence of a mistake, I found myself in the wrong Lobby. I propose, however, to atone for that mistake by moving the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £937, the cost of the maintenance of Hampton Court Park. The Royal parks professedly exist for the public advantage, and my objection is that the public enjoyment of these parks is unreasonably and unjustly restricted. Last year I obtained a Return which gives, on the one hand, the total area of each Park, and, on the other, the portion of that area from which the public are excluded. That return shows the exorbitant proportion of these parks to which the public are not admitted. The case I have selected—that of Hampton Court Park—illustrates the extent to which this obnoxious principle is carried out. Hampton Court Park contains no fewer than 752 acres, or, in other words, it is considerably larger than Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens put together; and yet, with the exception of a few privileged individuals, the public are entirely excluded from the enjoyment of it. Last year the First Commissioner was good enough to say he would inquire if it would be possible to remove the brick wall now enclosing the Park on one side for nearly two miles, and see whether it could be replaced by something of a more open character. Nothing has, however, been done. The First Commissioner met my arguments last year by the statement that the Park has never been open to the public. I daresay that is true; but I hardly suppose that the right hon. Gentleman meant to advance that as a serious argument, and I do not think I need deal with it. The right hon. Gentleman also said that the Park was not required in that locality. Well, it is true that the neighbourhood is exceptionally favoured, as it possesses Hampton Court Gardens and Bushey Park; but if the right hon. Gentleman wishes to take his stand on that argument, I think I may put before him an alternative course. If a large open space is not required in that neighbourhood there are certainly many localities in the Metropolis where it is grievously needed. If, then, the Government refuse to open this park, why not sell it, and with the proceeds of the sale provide a park in some growing neighbourhood in the East of London? I protest altogether against the Committee being required to pay £937 a-year for the sole purpose, as it seems to me, of providing enjoyment for a few favoured individuals who, I daresay, are very well able to provide gardens for themselves. I beg to move the reduction I have proposed.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £77,458, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Pickersgill*).

*MR. PLUNKET: As I promised the hon. Member last year, this subject has been considered. Hampton Court Park is undoubtedly the midst of a locality which is admitted by the hon. Member to be exceptionally favoured in the matter of pleasure gardens and recreation grounds, and so far as I have been able to ascertain there has been no such strong pressure of public opinion brought to bear upon us as should overcome the natural reluctance of the Treasury to add to the expense of keeping up this park. There would certainly be considerable addition to this expense if it were thrown open as the hon. Member suggests. It would also cost a large sum even to pull down the brick wall, not to speak of supplying in its place such palings as would be suitable for a public park. If the park were thrown open we should have to provide paths and gates, and we should also require a larger number of park-keepers. The cost would be really increased by some hundreds of pounds annually. Under the circumstances, we have not thought we should be justified in throwing the park open to the public.

MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman has put his refusal to open this park on two grounds. The first is that there is already adequate accommodation in the matter of parks for the public in the locality. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to Bushey Park, but in Bushey Park only about 500 acres out of 1,000 are open to the public. As to the amount received for keys at Hampton Court, one guinea was paid for each key, and the total amount obtained was £90, so that we are called upon to pay £900 per annum for maintaining a park used by about 90 persons. In point of fact, however, the park is not reserved for those 90 persons, but a great part for certain breeding horses, and I am obliged again to ask the right hon. Gentleman what becomes of our foals? I have been told that the cream coloured horses that occasionally appear roam about in the park, so that apparently we pay £900 per annum for the purpose of maintaining, close to the Metropolis, a park for the benefit of 90 persons, of certain foals which we never see, and of certain cream coloured horses which we uncommonly seldom see. We are perfectly ready to vote the money spent upon this park if we can have the run of the park, but not otherwise. I shall certainly support the Amendment.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: We are prepared at all times to vote money for the construction of gates or for the maintenance of paths if by so doing we can obtain the opening of a large area as an additional lung of the Metropolis. There is at Hampton Court something in the way of green fields belonging to the public, but at present the space which the people are allowed to use there is extremely restricted. It is time that the Office of Works should realize that these public spaces are to be utilized for the public. We are determined that the public shall not be shut out from them. We on this side have done with the "favoured few." We do not know anything about the "favoured few," and we intend to persevere with Amendments of this kind, year by year, until we get the whole of this space for the use of the persons who seek a little fresh air on Bank Holidays and other occasions. We will allow the persons who pay for keys to use the park in the same way as the general public use it, but in no other way.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): It appears to me that it will be impossible much longer to exclude the public from this park. I must say I think there is a good deal of force in the argument that the general public ought not to be called upon to pay any large sum towards throwing the park open, but I cannot but think that the cost might be defrayed by the London County Council.

*MR. PLUNKET: Of course I will consider the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, who has had much experience in this Department.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): There is something more serious than the mere question of expenditure upon this park, and that is the principle upon which the exclusion of the public is based. It is all very well to call these spaces Royal parks. We can understand appropriating a park for a Royal palace, to be used by Royalty, but this is no such case. Here we have a large piece of ground which is admitted to be public property. It should be used for the public. We, on this side, are not disinclined to pay for public spaces if the public use them, but here you have a park belonging to the public taken from the public, and the expense of keeping the public out of their own property is defrayed out of the public purse. That is the real common sense of this Vote.

*MR. PLUNKET: It is true that I did not rest my argument upon the question of this being a Royal park, but I wish to prevent any misapprehension arising on the subject. Whatever the policy of admitting the public may be, it would be an entirely new thing. This has always been a reserved part of a Royal park. From time to time portions of the Royal parks have been given up to the public; for instance, it is only within the last 50 or 60 years that Regent's Park was opened to the public. It is not the case that the public were ever admitted into Hampton Court Park, and they are not now excluded from something to which they formerly had access.

MR. MOLLOY: The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that this is a new proposal, though he does not base his argument upon that. I would point out that for the last four or five years hon. Members on this side of the House have been making these proposals. For four years we had a controversy in this House as to a rule laid down by the Ranger that nobody should drive through Richmond Park except in a private carriage, so that those who did not possess private carriages were not allowed to drive there. To my own knowledge for four or five years it has been urged that this portion of Hampton Court Park should be thrown open to the public. I would ask whether the question of expense is the sole obstacle in the way of opening the park? If so, this Committee will always be willing to pay that expense. I believe, from information I have, that the obstacle is not the expense of throwing the park open, and that the land is retained for the benefit of more or less private individuals. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to say whether the only obstacle to throwing open the land is the question of expense?

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I should like to be quite clear as to what this piece of land is used for. If it is used for improving the breed of horses, of course that is for the benefit of the public. If, however, the stud is not successful, and the horses bred are of no particular character, I think that the last refuge of the First Commissioner is cut away. If the land is used as a private garden for the benefit of certain private persons, I think the right hon. Gentleman would do well to take the advice given him to-day and see whether the park cannot be thrown open.

*MR. CUBITT (Surrey, Epsom): I think it only just to state on behalf of my constituents that when a representation was made to the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works by certain persons at Ditton in favour of opening a locked gate at Hampton Court opposite a ferry so as to save them a long walk in obtaining access to the gardens, he at once responded to the request made to him, and did as he was asked without incurring any extra expense.

*MR. PLUNKET: I am much obliged to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Cubitt) for what he has stated, and I may take this opportunity to point out that the expense incurred in connection with the Stud-House, Hampton Court, is for the half-bred breeding establishment; no portion of the money is applied to the thoroughbred establishment, which is maintained wholly out of the funds of the Civil List.

DR. TANNER: With regard to the gate that has been spoken of, the right hon. Gentleman has in the first place considered the convenience not of the bulk of the people, but of the constituents of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. What we want to assure is the convenience of the inhabitants of London generally. Instead of talking about the cost of the gate and paths, which must be a small sum, steps should be taken to throw down the hideous brick wall which bounds the park. Surely if we were to take example from other countries and follow the mode adopted in the parks of France, Germany, and other civilized places, that wall would be at once removed, and we should get rid of all those obstacles which are now obtruded by obstinate

Toryism against the wishes of the people.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 121; Noes 211.—(Div. List, No. 45.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I move the reduction of the Vote by £1,000. Richmond Park consists of 2,500 acres, and you have an expenditure of £636 for police and £1,000 for roads. Then you have 2,000 acres of underwood, and you are called upon to pay for that £3,000, besides the amounts expended on the police and the roads. Now, underwood pays for itself I have always understood; I do not know why. We have a number of rangers and sub-rangers, and that sort of thing. You have changed the name; they used to be gamekeepers; but, whatever the name, they are the same, and still exist. Would any gentleman in this House, or anywhere else, with a park of 2,500 acres, consisting of plantations and grass, spend upon it £3,000 per annum, irrespective of the roads, and get nothing for it? That is our position with regard to Richmond Park, and I think I am exceedingly moderate in only moving a reduction of £1,000. I leave you £2,000 per annum for police and roads, and to amuse yourselves with your rangers and gamekeepers; but I do think that a protest ought to be registered against this excessive expenditure upon this Park.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £77,395, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

DR. TANNER: I really think that hon. Gentlemen on this side have some reason to at least expect a response from Her Majesty's advisers upon this question, upon which they might have expected to be challenged.

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: Perhaps it may be convenient to the House that I should state that we propose to resume Committee of Supply on Thursday, taking first the Vote for the Submarine Telegraph Service, which is the new Service rendered necessary by the Government's assumption of the telegraphic communication between England and the Continent. After that we propose to go on with the Civil Service Estimates in their order as they stand, and at 10 o'clock to take the National Debt Conversion Bill.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cockermouth): When does the right hon. Gentleman propose to resume the discussion on the Naval Vote?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: On Monday next. We are under an engagement, and are bound to take Supply on Thursday.

MR. SEXTON: Do the Government intend to take the Committee stage of the Army Annual Bill to-night?

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: My right hon. Friend is not in his place, and I am not able to give an answer to that question. The Committee stage of the Army Annual Bill is usually formal, but if there are any notices on the Paper, no doubt some time will be given to their consideration.

MR. SEXTON: I have notice of an Amendment on the Paper.

***MR. W. H. SMITH**: It will be taken on Thursday then.

Resolutions to be reported upon Thursday.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

THE SLAVE TRADE.

***MR. SYDNEY BUXTON** (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I hope, Mr. Speaker, the House will not think me presumptuous in asking it to listen to me in reference to this important subject of the Slave Trade. I should not have ventured to do so if it were not that I have a strong hereditary interest in the subject. I do not think the House would desire me to detain it with any references to the horrors of the Slave Trade. We all know full well that the traffic in slaves throughout Africa produces awful suffering and an appalling waste of life year after year. The centre of Africa is rapidly becoming depopulated in order to gratify the greed and the lust of the Oriental slaveholders, and it has been calculated, I believe, by those conversant with the subject, that for every human being who is successfully enslaved some 20 or 30 others are sacrificed. In the last 80 years England has been almost single-handed making war against this hideous traffic, and I am glad to think that of late this country has had some seeming assistance, at all events, in the matter. The latest phase is the Anglo-German Agreement, which was entered into a few months ago in order to carry out a more thorough blockade of the coast of East Africa. I do not desire to enter into questions connected with that blockade, but I must confess that I am not prepared to blame the Government for having entered into that agreement, for they had to decide—a new departure having been already taken by the German Government—whether it was not in the interests of Africa and of Great Britain that we should enter into the arrangement. Indeed, I doubt, if the Government could have refused to accept a proposal for a friendly Power to help her in her great work, even though they may have had some doubt as to the entire genuineness of the object which the Germans had in view. By joining we increased our friendship with Germany, that partially influenced her proceedings. By forbearing it is pretty certain we should have lost much of our influence at Zanzibar. At the same, time while I do not blame the Government, I confess I do not agree with the very sanguine view of the matter which is apparently taken by the Government—namely, as Lord Salisbury said, that this blockade has been "exceedingly satisfactory." On two essential points the Government were over sanguine. England and Germany entered into the agreement on the understanding that the blockading vessels should have the right to search ships under whatever flag they sailed, and that no land operations would be taken in connection with the blockade. But it now appears that the French are inclined to stand on the dignity of their flag, and will not allow the right of search where it is concerned; and, as we are all aware, the Germans have unfortunately gone in for what is practically a land expedition, and have destroyed some hitherto peaceful towns. But the moral that I wish to draw is this: that a great question like this, in which so many nations have interests, direct or indirect, ought to be made an international question and not left to two Powers alone. All the Great Powers should take combined action in order that they might finally, if possible, bring this hateful traffic to an end. By international agreement they would be able to deal with a larger area and to serve a greater purpose. They might hope not only more effectually to intercept the supply, but to strike a deadly blow at the demand for slaves themselves. There is a good precedent for international action. I need not trouble the House with any detailed reference to the Congresses at which this subject has been discussed. As the House is aware, at the Vienna Congress of 1815, and again at the Conference at Verona in 1822, the English Government successfully urged the necessity of dealing with the Slave Trade. In 1841 a further Treaty was made by England, to which, unfortunately, France did not assent, which, declaring the slave trade piracy, as far as they were concerned, gave reciprocal powers to Austria, Prussia, and Russia to search suspected ships. Finally, the other day the representatives of nearly all the great nations, including Turkey, met together to consider the affairs of the Congo; and they unanimously agreed that every step in their power ought to be taken to put an end to the Slave Trade, in that portion of Africa at all events. Unfortunately, the opportunity which was afforded England of again dealing with this question at the time of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 was entirely neglected, and this neglect remains a blot on our escutcheon. Now, Mr. Speaker, at the time of that Treaty the attention of the accredited agents of the Great Powers assembled at Berlin was called to this matter, and they gave personal interviews and great attention the delegates appointed to lay the matter before them; indeed, they said that as far as they were concerned they were willing and desirous that a new departure should be taken in regard to it. But it was generally thought that England should take the initiative, yet the representatives of Her Majesty were alone in refusing to take action, and to see the delegates. Her Majesty's Government were—to our shame, be it said—bound hand and foot to a slave-owning country by the secret Treaty which they had made with Turkey. That is a blot which, though the Government cannot wipe it out, yet I hope they will endeavour to diminish its effect by taking the initiative now in a new departure. Fifty years ago the Great Nations met together to consider the question of the Slave Trade, and, considering the enormous strides made on the subject by public opinion during the last decade or two, considering the increased responsibility which rests upon all nations with regard to the opening up of the Dark Continent, I think it is not in any way premature to ask that a further step should now be taken, and that a fresh Conference of the Powers should be held to deal with this traffic. Germany and England, the two Powers most interested, have practically acknowledged the necessity of another Conference. When Prince Bismarck applied to England to join in the blockade, he applied also to the Cabinets of Paris, Lisbon, Brussels, and Rome to co-operate in the undertaking, thus showing that he thought the matter ought to be settled by the general consensus of the Powers rather than by one or two States individually. Our Government has gone even further, for in a despatch written in September last Lord Salisbury requested Lord Vivian to ask the Belgian Government to call a Conference of the Powers in order to discuss the question. These are his words—

> "Her Majesty's Government feel that the altered political conditions of the African seaboard calls for some united action of the Powers now responsible for its control with a view to the closing of all foreign markets for slaves, and the consequent discouragement of the internal slave-hunts."

The despatch went on to ask Belgium to call a Conference of the Powers. To that despatch the Belgian Government replied that they would be very glad indeed to call a Conference with that object; but, unfortunately, the incidents in the German Plan of Campaign, in the opinion of the English Government, put a stumbling-block in the way of the immediate calling of the Conference, and Lord Salisbury in November withdrew his proposal, though, as he said, he hoped that this step, from which so much good might be expected to result, is only postponed. The principle is thus admitted, and it comes to this, therefore—the question is whether or not this is an opportune moment to call a Conference. Many of us believe that the present is a very opportune moment to call a Conference of the Powers again to discuss the question of the Slave Trade. On the one hand, because the public conscience has been awakened and the public mind aroused on the subject of late in a way they have not been for some time past. It is not that a new crusade has been preached, but there has been an awakening of public opinion in this and in other countries, and other nations have shown a desire to share in the admirable work of the suppression of the Slave Trade. Germany, the great irritant, and France, the great obstructive in East African politics, have both of late declared their willingness as far as they can to assist England in this work. Italy is anxious to join also, and Portugal has declared that for this time, at all events, she is really in earnest in desiring to co-operate. While, on the one hand, there is this great increase of public opinion, on the other there is at the present moment a fresh upheaval of the Arab element in Africa against the Europeans. It is difficult to say how far this upheaval is due to the question of the Slave Trade, to religious animosity, or to a fear on the part of the Arabs that the spread of the influence of the European in South Africa will ultimately annihilate them and drive them out of the Continent. But whether it is due to fanaticism, greed of gain, or a real struggle for existence, certain it is that, unless it be checked, one principal result of that fresh upheaval will be this—that the Slave Trade will be enormously increased and the cause of civilization and humanity in Africa will be thrown back for many a decade. I submit that the Anglo-German blockade will neither on the one hand satisfy public opinion, nor on the other hand will it be sufficient to check the rising of the Arabs against the Europeans. What, it may be asked, may we expect to obtain from a meeting of the Great Powers; what measures could they take to put an end to the Slave Trade? There are four things of a real and practical nature which we might hope to attain from a meeting of the Powers. In the first place, the *status* of slavery should be no longer recognized by international law; secondly, the Slave Trade should by international law be declared piracy; thirdly, we should get rid of the difficulty which at present exists with regard to the right of search of suspected ships carrying other flags; and, fourthly, there ought to be greater restriction and supervision under international law of the imports of arms and ammunition into Central Africa. Now, in regard to the question of piracy, what we desire is that by international law a slave trader shall be declared a pirate, and shall receive such punishment as is meted out to pirates. I am glad to think that so far as regards any of our own subjects who have engaged in the Slave Trade for the last 60 years they have been treated as if engaged in a piratical pursuit; and as long ago as 1841 we were able, as I have already shown, to obtain the assent of some of the other Great Powers to that part of our programme. But, unfortunately, while we declare slave trading under our flag to be piracy, and some other Powers do the same, yet it is only a municipal law, and there is no international law declaring it to be universally piracy. Great difficulties and serious obstacles to the prevention of the Slave Trade ensue from this deficiency. We have no right as a nation to allow our war vessels, except by mutual agreement, to search ships sailing under other flags, however much we may suspect them of being slavers. I am sorry to say that France has consistently refused to allow dhows sailing under her flag to be searched. She seems to think that the dignity of her flag is enhanced by allowing—as was the case at all events until lately—its purchase at a small price, and by seeing it wave over and protecting these piratical slavers. If the slave trade were declared piracy by international law, each nation would acquire the right of mutual search of suspected vessels. And there would be a great further advantage. At present, where the Arab slavers fly a foreign flag or no flag at all, even though our gunboats may catch them red-handed, their wretched persons are held sacred, and the most we can do is to seize the dhows and liberate the slaves, while the slavers themselves get off scot-free. Though we have abolished capital punishment except for murder itself, and though we may not be able, as has been suggested, to string-up the slave-dealers or to flog them, still, if they were declared pirates by international law, we could give them 12 or 14 years' penal servitude. A few such sentences would greatly encourage the others, and would, I believe, lead the slavers to seek some other traffic in which there would be less risk to their precious skins. I do not think I need trouble the House with arguments in reference to the advantages to be gained from the prohibition by mutual international agreement of the import of arms and ammunition into Africa. As is well known, the import of arms and ammunition is very much at the bottom of the Slave Trade, because by the possession of arms of precision the Arabs are able to master crowds of defenceless Africans, and to depopulate whole districts. I am strongly of opinion that such operations as we do undertake ought to be, as far as we are concerned, confined to naval operations. It seems to me that to engage in land operations would be absolutely fatal as a policy, and the Germans, if they really attempt to carry out such a policy, will find that out to their cost. If a land force were sent up the country it would have no objective in view, it would have no opportunity of meeting the enemy in a body, and it would be decimated by disease and overwhelmed by the difficulty of food and transport. So far as our physical force policy is concerned, I think, therefore, it should be confined to naval operations. But I should like, however, to see land operations of a peaceful character—namely, that we should obtain the moral pressure of international agreement directed against the existence of slavery where it is still recognized as an institution. It would be a great step if an International Congress would declare that it would no longer recognize the status of slavery where slavery still exists. One great difficulty which arises in connection with the continued recognition of the status of slavery is the question to which reference has very often been made in this House—the difficulty in connection with fugitive slaves. Every Englishman has always desired that, if possible, the deck of a man-of-war shall be as free to the slave as if he had set his foot upon our soil. When at one time a Government of the same constitution as the present did attempt to diminish the force of that principle the public outcry was so great that they had to revoke the so-called Slave Circular, and revert to that which everyone believed was the then state of our law, but which they thought was not so. But there is a great difficulty in connection with this matter. We may have a strong opinion about it, and may send strong instructions to commanders of our ships; but, as a matter of fact, we have no real right so to deal with this question in the present state of international law. Moreover, the proceedings of different nations in this matter vary considerably, and some do not in any way admit that the decks of their war vessels are free soil. When, again, it comes to the question of the decks of merchant-ships, which is a far more important question, there is no power of declaring them free soil in a port in which slavery exists, and the result is that if the fugitive slave comes on board he must be handed back to his owner, or the captain becomes liable in damages. If my proposition were carried out, we should no longer recognize that such a thing as the status of slavery could exist, and there would be no necessity to hand a slave back to his owner, or even to the authorities of the country. Further than that, the non-recognition by international law of the status of slavery would exercise a very great moral pressure in the direction of the final abolition of slavery, and if an International Congress were called, the countries in which slavery still exists would be asked to attend. It is possible that, in the present state of public opinion, most of them would be ready to admit that the time has come for the abolition of slavery. But, whether they did or not, the moral pressure which would be exercised by the other Great Powers would go a long way to finally bring to an end the question of slavery. I know we are told by some, who are interested in the work that is going on in Africa, that by taking the course I have indicated we shall be doing more harm than good, especially in the interior of Africa, and that we had better leave the work of putting an end to slavery and the Slave Trade to our missionaries, and to the effects of civilization and trade. Unfortunately, however, the results of missionary effort in the direction of the abolition of slavery are infinitesimal, and I am afraid that if we wait until the natives are converted, the inhabitants of large tracts of country in Africa will be swept away before the influence of the missionaries can put an end to this traffic in human beings, and the same applies to the question of trade. But if some general arrangement could be arrived at among the civilized Powers, by which the Slave Trade should be declared piracy, the difficulties surrounding the right of search and the importation of arms and ammunition could be removed, and slavery itself affected at its source, much would be done to put an end to the Slave Trade and to give increased opportunities for converting the souls and clothing the bodies of the Africans. If there is any hope that such an agreement as I have indicated can be arrived at, it is the duty, and I am sure it will be the pleasure of this country, to take the initiative in bringing about such an agreement. We ask the Government to give us a pledge that they will, at the earliest possible moment, carry out the opinions they formed some months ago, that a further new departure should be taken in order, if possible, to exterminate this horrible trade. I beg to move the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in view of the present increasing and extending desolations of Africa caused by the slave trade, and also of the large responsibilities which European nations have now assumed in respect to that continent, the time has come when full and complete effect should be given to those declarations against the slave trade which were delivered by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and by the Conference at Verona in 1822; and that, therefore, an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that She will be graciously pleased to take steps for calling together (in London, if possible) a Conference of the Powers, in order to devise such measures for its repression as may be at the same time effective and in accordance with justice, and under the regulations of international law."—(*Mr. S. Buxton.*)

SIR J. KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): In rising to second the Motion brought before the House by my hon. Friend, I feel I need not take up much of its time in striving to demonstrate that the question of the Slave Trade, which has deeply moved the hearts of the people of this country, which has been fought out with such persistency in this House and in this country, and which, so far as this nation is concerned, was brought to a triumphant issue many years back, is upon us now with all its horrors. We cannot shut our eyes to the pictures of the slave gangs, with all their miserable accompaniments, crossing over Africa, leaving enormous tracts of cultivated country, equal in size to European countries, desolate, and turning them into howling wildernesses. We cannot shut our ears to the cry of suffering humanity which comes to us to deliver that fruitful land from the curse of the Slave Trade; and it is not a question of humanity alone, but one of self-interest also. We cannot find that outlet for our manufactures which is so necessary to our commercial existence and prosperity in communities which have been deprived of all their inhabitants. We cannot help feeling disappointed that after all our efforts so little seems really to have been done. The slave traders are now spread through the length and breadth of the Continent of Africa, and even the discoveries of men like Livingstone and Stanley have in many cases been the means of opening out fresh Slave Trade routes and encouraging the Arabs to penetrate into the interior further than they have ever done before. But there has been of late a new step taken by European Powers which seems to call for a new departure. The whole political map of Africa has been parcelled out between the different Powers of Europe, and it is right that we should call upon those Powers to remember that right and duty are correlative, and that the advantages they hope to gather from acquiring a sphere of influence over this Continent carry with them great responsibility. We could not, of course, protest against other nations seeking new openings for their trade, and we wish them well, but at the same time our old traditional policy calls upon us to make an appeal to them to use their influence to put down this great evil of the Slave Trade, and to try and obtain the benefit of united action in doing so. At the Congress of Verona, at which England, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and France were represented, the Duke of Wellington brought forward resolutions urging the Powers to make the Slave Trade piracy. France objected on the ground that such a proposition was *ultra vires* of the political Conference. The result was that nothing actually was done. Since that Conference various Powers have been induced to make the Slave Trade piracy, and have granted each other a mutual right of search. Among them are Austria, Brazil, Germany, England, Portugal, Prussia, Russia and Spain, and as late as 1862 the captain of a vessel was hanged at New York for piracy. For some years the limited right of search was granted by the French Government, but at the expiration of the Treaty of 1865 this power was withdrawn, and since that time no right of search has existed in regard to vessels carrying the French flag. The slave traders have availed themselves to the utmost of the knowledge of this fact, and I believe at the present time, by the payment of £5 or £6, the right to use the French flag can be obtained at Madagascar. The result has been that the trade under the French flag amounts to twice as much as that under any other flag, and our efforts with regard to cruisers have been rendered almost entirely nugatory. In a despatch of September last, Lord Salisbury directed that the attention of the French Government should be called to the flagrant case of the landing of 75 slaves from a dhow carrying the French flag under the guns of a British man-of-war. The result was that orders were sent out to the French ships to look out for the slave traders, and catch them if possible. Lord Salisbury followed that up by an important despatch in October to Lord Lytton, pointing out that the immunity from search enjoyed by vessels flying the French flag was an encouragement to the slavers to carry on the Slave Trade by sea, and also tended to develop it on land; and that that traffic devastated countries which the European nations were endeavouring to open up to Christianity and civilization; and he asked that France might accord that mutual right of search which in the case of other nations had not in its operation led to any difficulty. To that appeal no answer has been vouchsafed; and we can look to nothing but the strong force of public opinion to induce France to change her attitude on the subject. A gentleman who came over here with Cardinal Lavigerie, and who is an active supporter of the French Anti-Slavery Society, has written a letter, stating that it is utterly impossible to obtain the consent of the French Parliament and people to giving English gunboats the right to search vessels carrying the French flag. He recommends that the question shall be dealt with from a general point of view, and that there should be an agitation for a rule common to all nations, authorizing the searching of vessels. We must recognise what is the position of the Government of France, how very delicate is the condition of parties, and how unwilling any Prime Minister with a majority of a dozen or so must be to enter into a course of action that might render him unpopular. We have Treaties with Turkey; but they are not carried out. Jeddah, which is under Turkish dominion, is one of the great marts for slaves, and while, as it is said, there are a thousand eunuchs in the Palace at Constantinople, it is evident the Turks will be unwilling to curtail the source from which supplies of slaves are obtained. On the 17th of September Lord Salisbury asked Belgium to take the initiative in summoning a Conference to which Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain, and Turkey should be invited. Belgium answered that she was ready to do so if the Powers were willing to come together; but, in the month of November, Lord Salisbury wrote and said he thought the occasion was not opportune, for various reasons. Whether those reasons were the complications which have occurred in East Africa, or that the Powers were not willing to take part in a Conference, was not stated. All we know is, that though Lord Salisbury earnestly desired to act in the matter, he thought the occasion was inopportune. It is, however, to be hoped that the Conference will not be postponed *ad infinitum*, and that Her Majesty's Government will lose no fitting opportunity of pressing it forward. We spend large sums of money on cruisers, and at present that money is thrown away, partly on account of the immunity enjoyed by slavers under the French flag, and partly because steam launches are needed that will overtake the slave dhows, which at present outstrip our ships and land their crews, who disappear in the bush. It would seem that the time is now very opportune for action in the matter. We are on the very best terms with Germany; we have, at this moment, in this country a very important Envoy from Germany; and Germany is under some obligation to us on account of the obloquy we have been brought under from falling in with her proposals. Among the questions that will come before the Congress, I think that of domestic slavery in the Congo will have to be considered; and we may hope it will result in the formation of that International Commission which was ordered to be set on foot at the time when the Congo State was founded, because it is said that great irregularities have occurred in that State. But while we endeavour to cut off the supply of slaves, it is necessary also to cut off the demand; and I think the Congress should be asked to procure the abolition of the legal *status* of slavery in Mahommedan countries, and, first and foremost, in Pemba and Zanzibar. Through our occupation of Egypt, slave markets are no longer held there; and any slave may now go and demand his freedom. That is being carried out now, under a Treaty which took effect in 1884, with the hearty co-operation of the Khedive. The same policy was to have been pursued in the Soudan. Much has been done by Her Majesty's Government in this matter. The fact that Slave Papers have been presented to us within a month or two of the actual occurrences, instead of at a time when the matters referred to have become ancient history, deserves recognition. The Government have the House of Commons and the country at their back in this matter. We hope that, amidst all the difficulties attending Foreign Office work, and in the special circumstances attending the present unhappy state of things in East Africa, the Government will not let this matter sleep, but will realize that it is a question on which the country has set its heart and its mind, and one on which it will not relax its efforts until it has been brought to a successful issue.

*Mr. A. E. PEASE (York): I am very sanguine this Resolution will meet with general approval, and I am not without hope that Her Majesty's Government will give a favourable response to the appeals made from both sides of the House. We have Lord Salisbury's own admission of the necessity of a Conference, and the expression of his hope that the question is only postponed for a time. I am sure anyone who has any knowledge of the horrors of this African slave traffic must regard this question of an International Conference as a pressing and urgent one. During the last 10 or 15 years there has been something like apathy, something like popular cynicism, in regard to the Slave Trade, and this has been indicated by the heedlessness of this House with regard to the publication of papers on the subject. But lately public opinion has been aroused to the horrors of this trade, and we have seen the Government respond by laying information abundantly and punctually before us. I do not think anyone who looks at the Slave Trade as it exists in Africa, or who has given any attention whatever to the subject, but must be struck with the frightful cruelties that accompany it. It is a traffic associated with every imaginable crime, and murder, rape, and the unsexing of males are among the chief atrocities perpetrated. When the hon. Member for Poplar alluded to the fact that only one in 30 of the slaves originally captured reach the slave market, I was much struck with the figures, and they remind me of other figures given by a man well acquainted with the interior of Africa and the Soudan, and an acknowledged authority, Mr. Wylde, who states that for each eunuch that is made 200 human beings lose their lives in the performance of the horrible operation. So that the 500 eunuchs now in Cairo have been obtained by the sacrifice of 100,000 human lives in the Soudan. It is not only for domestic purposes the Slave Trade in Africa is carried on; the Arab dealers employ slaves by the thousand as the means of transporting goods to the coast and inland markets, whole districts being depopulated to make beasts of burden of the inhabitants. Therefore, I think we may justifiably look forward to increasing civilization in Africa and the introduction of better means of transport as one means of cutting off one of the great sources of the Slave Trade. An International Conference is wanted in order that effective measures may bring about an effective blockade; it cannot be said that the present blockade is effective. In my opinion there should be a great International Preventive Service. Though I know many argue that the existence of the blockade is mischievous in its tendency, I cannot but think that if all the Powers of Europe used their vessels as a great International Police it would do a great deal towards stopping the export trade in slaves. But, after all, the export trade is but a small fragment of the trade as a whole. Commander Cameron, with whom I have had the honour of conversing, told me that he estimated that the export by sea was only about a thirtieth of the whole Slave Trade. I also think with the hon. Member for Poplar that the punishment of Arab slave dealers should be made a matter of international concern. There are other points to which the attention of the House and the Government should be directed, and one of these is the difference in the method adopted by different nations in dealing with fugitive slaves. Even our own method is sometimes open to comment. If hon. Members will peruse the Blue Book issued in 1888 they will find numerous instances recorded of fugitive slaves having come on board English men-of-war and where the commander of the vessel has been perplexed, by the conflicting instructions, how to act, and seems almost to apologize for giving runaway slaves their freedom. A most flagrant case of the kind was reported not long ago by an officer on board one of Her Majesty's ships on an African station, and deserves, I think, the attention of the House. An account of the circumstances appeared in the *United Service Gazette* of September 8 last year. The ship was lying off Muscat, and at daybreak a poor black fellow swam from the shore and climbing on board fell exhausted on deck. He described through an interpreter how he had escaped from a dhow in which he had made a passage from Zanzibar. Further, he said two more dhows with slaves were expected, but no advantage was taken of this information. To the horror of the black fugitive, when the commander of the vessel appeared he ordered the man overboard at once, without listening to his story, and told the quartermaster he had grievously exceeded his duty by allowing him on board. When the hon. Member for Falmouth called attention to the incident, the First Lord of the Admiralty declared that the report was incredible in view of the definite instructions given to commanders, and so it may appear to many Members, but nevertheless the editor of the *Western Morning News* has declared that he can produce the officer's letter, and will disclose the name if his correspondent is guaranteed against any punishment for breach of regulations for writing to a newspaper on such a matter. I do not know whether the Admiralty have any further information on this subject. This right of refuge is one of the points to which the attention of a Conference would be directed. There is no need for me to make any references to the history of the Slave Circulars. I am sure that if the country knew that any doubt exists about whether a fugitive slave becomes free when setting foot on an English vessel it would at once insist on the issue of instructions removing any doubt whatever on the point. I believe Italy, Germany, and certainly the United States, agree in regarding a slave as perfectly free immediately he gets on board one of their vessels. A Secretary to the United States Navy has asserted that most emphatically, in these words—

> "No officer would for a moment think of giving up a slave who had taken refuge on board his vessel, in order that he might return to a condition of slavery."

I do not think we should be behind our American cousins in this matter. Another matter is the enforcement of Treaties which already exist with semi-civilized Powers, like Abyssinia and Zanzibar, in which Treaties they have pledged themselves to deny the legal *status* of slavery. Cargoes of slaves have been run into Pemba under the very nose of an English man-of war, but because the French flag was flying we have been unable to interfere. It is a monstrous anomaly that the mere flying of the French flag or of any flag should limit our right to search any vessel that may be engaged in the Slave Trade, whilst we permit, and the French give instructions for, the searching of any native vessels under our flag. I have a letter from an officer in the Navy, whose name I am afraid to give, because I suppose making public matters of this kind is an irregularity in the Service. He says—

> "At Zanzibar there is an excellent French Consul, who very rarely, if ever, gives the protection of the flag; but I am convinced that the flag is obtained with the greatest facility at Mayotte, Nossi Bé, the Comoro Islands, and possibly also Madagascar. The sum charged is about £6 per year per dhow."

The fact that the French flag shelters the worst slave trading in the world is a curious comment upon Cardinal Lavigerie's crusade; and although I most heartily sympathize with that noble man in his efforts to put down the Slave Trade, yet I think the first lesson needed is for him to teach the French nation and the French Republic that they should do something to prevent the carrying on of the Slave Trade under the French flag. The subject has been dealt with so exhaustively by previous speakers that I need not add more to these few words in support of the Resolution.

*SIR WALTER BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.): I think the House must feel it a pleasure to get away from virulent Party attacks, and to turn to a subject which must awaken in all English breasts a feeling of generosity and hope. Previous speakers have touched but lightly on the losses we have sustained in the Dark Continent; and I might mention that on this very day we have heard of the loss of a man who did good service to his country, not only in office at home, but in Suakin and other places in Africa—namely, Mr. Guy Dawnay, whose loss we all deplore. In placing before the House a few considerations as to the shortcomings of this country with regard to the Slave Trade, I may mention, first, the question of the Soudan; secondly, the question of Zanzibar and the coast below Zanzibar; thirdly, the question of the Congo; and, fourthly, the question of the Gold Coast. I would ask any fair and honest man in this House whether any greater encouragement was ever given to the Slave Trade than was given to it by the abandonment of the Soudan? Surely, even if it was thought by some people to be right that the Soudan and the Egyptian garrisons should be given up, our duty still was clear in regard to the Slave Trade. We have lost a Gordon, but there is one of his lieutenants still remaining—Emin Pasha—who still occupies the Equatorial Provinces, has done his duty nobly and gallantly maintaining civilization in the country which we abandoned. What ought to have been our great object with regard to all that country? If we had had the pluck to do what a great nation ought to have done, we should not only have under our control the whole country up to Khartoum, now again the centre of the Slave Trade, but we should be able to go through the 500 miles of independent country between Emin Pasha and the Congo River. When Belgium undertook great commercial interest on the Congo, it might have been thought that Belgium would determine that slavery should be put a stop to; but when Stanley started from Zanzibar to relieve Emin Pasha, he took with him Tippoo Tib, the greatest slave trader in the world. Tippoo Tib has since been appointed Governor of Stanley Falls, and, instead of giving up the Slave Trade, does just as he did before, to the great disgrace and discredit of those who employed him. Then, what has taken place at Zanzibar? Mr. Stanley has stated clearly that when he got to Zanzibar he was astonished at the state of affairs there. He found that the Germans had been placed in possession of a large tract of coast. The trade with which we had been connected had been entirely destroyed, and the colonization of the Germans, however well-intentioned, had ended in a stupendous blow being dealt not against, but in favour of, the Slave Trade. We ought to have demanded compensation for the injuries which our British-Indian subjects have suffered. That is a subject which demands the serious consideration of this country, and we ought to do everything in our power to protect their interests. It is not too late even now, and I venture to hope the Government will have the courage to demand from Germany that compensation which our British-Indian subjects so fully deserve. And briefly now let me touch upon this question as it concerns the Gold Coast. What is the town in the neighbourhood—in the immediate neighbourhood—of the Gold Coast, which furnishes the largest number of slaves for sale in the course of the year? Why, it is the town of Salagha, 120 miles from our frontier. There are never less than 20,000 slaves sold there every year. Even our own people are in the habit of buying 6,000 or 8,000 slaves, who are taken back to the Gold Coast, and the authorities know it to be done; but, because these slaves are exchanged for goods and the trade is prosperous, it is allowed to go on. Why should we not do as we did before in the case of our Possessions in the West Indies, and put a stop to this horrible trade? The largest town in our Protectorate near the Slave Market is Panto, containing 5,000 inhabitants. My authority was in Salagha in time to see the arrival of two caravans, the one containing 400, the other 500 slaves. He saw an old woman of 80 bought for a few cowries of the value of 8s., to look after five or six little children from two to ten years old, who were sold at the same time. The men to be sold came in after a march of two or three months, with their right hands tied in a knot behind their necks, and from the first to the last a rope was passed through, so that the Arab dealers, if they pulled it, could drag down all these men at once. To the north and north-west of our Gold Coast there is a country densely populated, but which has never been explored by Europeans. The people there are all pagans, and there is a certain King Jaberima there, who has 15,000 men, mostly mounted, and all well armed. They are Mahommedans. With them he besieges villages and towns, carries off the men, women, and children, and kill the men who resist. All the men who fight he mows down unmercifully. Salagha is comparatively close to our frontier, and we ought to show our willingness to forego anything we might otherwise gain, and make a start and do something in the interest of those unfortunate creatures. All these facts can be verified by two gentlemen in this country at present. I do not like to weary the House by too many statements of this kind, because there will be many hon. Members anxious to speak, but these are matters which certainly deserve our most serious consideration. There is another subject which is of interest to the House in which I would say a word. I hold in my hand a letter written in August by Mr. Bonner to Mr. Jamieson, which states that Mr. Stanley has arrived at Unana, some 500 or 600 miles from Stanley Falls, bringing with him 130 Zanzibarese, and 66 of Emin Pasha's porters. That shows that Emin Pasha was able to give him a certain number of porters. All Stanley's own followers would appear to have been dissipated in some way or other, but it would seem that Emin

Pasha has been able not only to hold his own, but has been in a position to give Stanley a certain number of porters. I will not read anything further in the letter, as it is a sad subject to me. I feel most grateful to all my friends who have so kindly expressed their sympathy to me in my terrible loss, and I certainly feel grateful to my country for having valued as it has done the services of my poor son. This brings me to the great question of what must be done in the present condition of affairs. It seems to me that the first thing is to determine, and having determined, to maintain those spheres of influence which we have laid down for ourselves. I am one of those who are bold enough to think that this is not a policy too great for this country. We ought to know our own minds, and not to give in to any other nation. We have said that our sphere of influence should extend from the south to the Zambesi, the magnificent waterway up which so many of our missionaries have lost their lives. Our missionaries, with the Bible in their hands, whom we as a nation are bound in every way to protect, have been the pioneers into those regions. I am proud in this connection to mention a Sussex man, Bishop Hannington, *sans peur et sans reproche*, who has done everything that a good and religious man could do for the work he took in hand. But he is only a type of those who have gone forth to proclaim the glad tidings to those unfortunate people whom, I hope, we shall never neglect. Portugal is a country we should help in every way in our power; but she is not a colonizing country like England. I say, with pride, that there is no other nation which has the same gift of colonization as the English nation has. We ought to deal liberally with Portugal, but at the same time we should ask for Delagoa Bay. We have lands on the West Coast we could well exchange with Portugal. It is only by stating what we want and what lands we are prepared to throw our protecting shield over that a great country like ours can do its duty. But there is another question. Operations by land have been talked about—though they have been touched upon very lightly, because the question, as every-one knows, is a difficult one. Such operations may in certain eventualities from time to time be necessary, but I will put that question aside. We have companies, the East Africa Company, for example, at this moment anxious to do their duty. The East Africa Company has a large tract of land running up to the Albert Nyanza, and we know from Mr. Mackenzie that nothing has been left undone on their part to obtain the affections of the natives. That is the best civilizing influence that can be used. We are bound to give these countries every aid and protection in our power, especially by sea. Well, there is another company proposed to operate in the neighbourhood of Suakin. Nothing, it seems to me, would do more good to the neighbourhood of Suakin than if we could get a company to go there. I deeply regret that the railway between that place and Berber has never been carried out. If we had had the pluck which some of our ancestors possessed, we might have sent a little expedition across the country, and then Gordon would have been still alive; and if we had the railway, though we should prevent a good deal of traffic going down the Nile, we should have turned it in a direction where it would be a great deal more profitable, and where it would operate as a material safeguard against the Slave Trade. It is because I believe that companies are anxious to undertake the arduous duty of extending the civilizing influence of this country and will carry out the duty loyally that I press this particular question on Her Majesty's Government. I will only say in conclusion that, as one of the greatest nations in the world, as the country which has done more than any other to promote civilization, we ought to do all that lies in our power to promote the peace, civilization, prosperity, and happiness of these people.

Mr. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): The hon. Member who has moved this Resolution possesses an hereditary interest in this question, and I personally cannot but feel a national interest in it, as I remember that the great man who for 13 years in this House fought the battle of freedom acknowledged his obligations to the Irish Members of the Unreformed Parliament of that day. As far as I remember, this Resolution is in the very words of the Resolution which stirred the great heart of humanity and the conscience of the world at the great meeting held in Prince's Hall when

Cardinal Lavigerie made his magnificent speech. Bishop Hannington, whom I have the honour of knowing, and Bishop Smythies, who knows more of this portion of Africa than any other man, are in exact accord with the Mover of the Resolution, that no great good is to be expected from armed expeditions into the interior. Bishop Smythies writes that where a British mission is established, there slavery gradually disappears in all its worst forms, and that missionary zeal is the only effective remedy for the evil. The Bishop further writes that great good will also combine to declare the Slave Trade piracy and to act on the declaration. I believe also that we might reckon on the co-operation of Mahommedan Powers. It is true that the Koran recognizes domestic slavery; but the sanctity of the conjugal tie is respected and children are not separated from their parents. In spite of the many revolting features of American slavery the owners always had regard to the health and productive capabilities of their slaves. But no such mitigating circumstances exists in the hideous traffic in Africa with which this country has so long contended. There ought to be no difficulty in obtaining a Conference of the European Powers, for on this question there are no jealousies of nationality, no parties, no conflicting interests. It is a question upon which all the countries of Europe are united by the bonds of human sympathy. I have great pleasure in supporting the Resolution.

*SIR L. PELLY (Hackney, N.): There is no question concerning the evils of slavery, although the domestic slavery in Asia is not, perhaps, so cruel a crime as was that of predial slavery in the West, where a white man might drive a nigger to death for the sake of enhanced profits in sugar, or what not. Still, whatever may be the shades of difference in slavery, slavery is everywhere so great an evil, that every man in this House will do his utmost to put a stop, not only to the Slave Trade, but to the status of slavery. But how is this to be done? It does not necessarily follow that, because this widely-spread evil pervades two Continents, therefore the Government of these Islands should feel itself bound to cope with and able to destroy it. Nevertheless, we have done what we could in many ways. We have for generations past maintained Her Majesty's ships along the East Coast of Africa, watching the slave craft, destroying dhows, and enfranchising slaves. I know from my own official experience in the territories of Zanzibar that so long ago as 1861 this country was assured that if it would only persevere in its naval operations against the Slave Trade for a few years longer, that trade would be extinguished. Yet now, in 1889, we are told on authority that the Slave Trade is more active and thriving than ever, and the Resolution now before us declares, on the face of it, that it is in consequence of the increase and extension of the trade that the Resolution itself is framed, and that it is because the time is opportune that the Resolution proposes an International Conference, and expresses a hope that countries like Turkey, Arabia, and Persia may be induced to abolish the status of slavery. Well, one thing is plain, that the use of naval force during a generation along the East Coast of Africa has admittedly failed. No doubt the ships we are now able to station between the Mozambique Channel and the Gulf of Aden are both swifter and in every way superior to the five-knot gunboats that used to steam with green wood after swift dhows in 1861. But still it is absurd to suppose that half a dozen vessels, dependent upon coal, can successfully watch the indentations of a savage coast-line, beset with coral reefs and rapid currents, and extending from 18 degrees south latitude to 11 degrees north. Nor is it to be expected that the Admiralty will permanently retain on the East Coast the force with which they have complemented the German Squadron in the blockade. I am aware it is understood that the Islands of Pemba and Zanzibar are now to be blockaded, and no doubt the present blockading squadron can lay out their boats and encircle these Islands, and drive the Arabs there ashore up into a corner. But what then? Suppose you find the Arabs, you cannot touch them. They will embark in their craft under your very noses, and sail off to the mainland, where they will again prosecute their nefarious trade. But to return to the Resolution. I confess my inability to concur with the Mover that the present time is particularly opportune for Her Majesty's Government volunteering a leading part in an International Conference for the suppression of slavery in the East. There was a time, and I witnessed it, when the representation of the United Kingdom was tenfold more powerful than it is at present. Aye, from the Indus along the coast of Mekran, round the shore line of the Gulfs of Persia and Oman, along the coast of the Arabian Peninsular, thence across to Cape Guardafui, and so along the East Coast of Africa to the borders of the Portuguese Settlements, the word of the British Representative was almost law. But those days are gone. I do not attribute the decadence to any question connected with the Slave Trade in particular, but rather to the evolution of European States, and to the opening of the Suez Canal. But the fact remains that in Asia and Africa we are not what we were, and that the present day, as compared with days gone by, cannot be regarded as opportune. Again, the Mover of the Resolution suggests the most desirable object of inducing Turkey, Arabia, and Persia to abolish within their several territories the status of slavery, for he, doubtless, feels that in this, as in other trades, supply will endeavour to follow demand. It is likely that, if powerful combined pressure be brought to bear on Persia she will make promises, but will she, can she, fulfil them? Her slave demand is one which rests upon national opinion, and I venture to question whether there be any sudden, exterior cure for an ancient social disease. Anyway, if Persia does crush the slave status, she has become a very different country from what she was when I resided 11 years within her limits. Nevertheless, by all means try a Conference; try moral force, as physical force has failed. One hon. Member has cited an instance in which the commander of a British man-of-war, lying in the Cove of Muscat, ordered a fugitive slave off his deck. Well, he was lying in territorial waters, and his proper course would have been to communicate with the British Consul and the Sultan. But if you will neither apply to your own civil authority, nor to the head of the State, nor to his functionaries, what can you expect? I can only say that the Sultan of Muscat has never failed to respond to my wishes when I have made a similar application to him. But, be all that as it may, of this rest assured—that boats scouring along the shore line of the East Coast of Africa will incur many dangers, will harass trade, and, as experience has amply shown, achieve no practical permanent good.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham): The House must feel the force of the observations of the hon. Gentleman who last spoke. The weight of experience and the great knowledge which he possesses on this question entitle us to regard with the greatest respect whatever falls from him upon this question. A Conference limited in its operations and kept within well-defined limits might be valuable, but a Conference such as has been suggested, not in this but in previous debates, might give rise to serious commercial and political complications, which might be extremely detrimental and prejudicial to the object which we have in view. Where is the Slave Trade, and where is it to be dealt with? I suppose it may be assumed that, at any rate at present, it is impossible to reach the Slave Trade at its source. You can only do that by a gradual process of civilization. Therefore, you are compelled to grapple with the Slave Trade at its outset, which is almost entirely confined to the littoral of the Red Sea. It is perfectly true that there is a considerable Slave Trade along the coast of Zanzibar, I think it would not be a difficult thing for the Government to conclude a Treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar, whereby a system of registration might be introduced, and the gradual extinction of the Slave Trade so effected. I understand from authoritative sources that the Sultan of Zanzibar is disposed to treat with the English Power and with no other European Powers. But where is this great evil of the Slave Trade chiefly to be found? Along the Red Sea, and its destination is Jeddah, and it is distributed by various channels through a large extent of Asia Minor. Considering the relations which we hold with Turkey, it is a perfect scandal that an open slave market should be permitted to exist at Jeddah. I ask the hon. Baronet (Sir J. Fergusson) whether it is possible for Her Majesty's Government to make such representations to the Sultan of Turkey as will finally stop this slave market at Jeddah? The traffic is carried on by means of dhows, which chiefly convey the slaves across the Red Sea at night time. The means of suppressing the Slave Trade consists of some five gunboats which steam at the rate of about five knots. I would suggest to the hon. Baronet the necessity of organizing an Intelligence Department, whereby information would be afforded as to the movements of slave dhows along the coast. Now, from information which recently appeared in the French journals, it would appear that the Arab slave dealers have the most perfect system of information. They know the whereabouts of Her Majesty's boats, and the information is conveyed through various channels along the coast, and they seize the time for transmitting their slaves across the channel, when they know there is no probability of an effective prevention by Her Majesty's vessels. I should wish to point out that for immediate purposes something of a useful character might be effected by the organization on the part of the Government of an Intelligence Department which could employ gunboats steaming rapidly along the coast, and performing duties that would put a stop to the Slave Market at Jeddah. I do not think there would be any difficulty in putting an end to the present abuse of the French flag, and I trust that the right hon. Baronet will be able to state that a Convention will speedily be concluded between Her Majesty's Government and that of France, whereby that abuse will once for all be stopped.

*SIR R. TEMPLE (Evesham): As the House is aware, I never rise to address it unless I have had some experience—often of a hard and laborious character—in regard to at least some portion of the subject under debate. Of course, I cannot pretend to a knowledge of the vast region, comprised in this debate, extending from about 1,500 south of the Equator to about 1,500 miles north of the Line; but, at any rate, I do know something of the North East Coast of the African Continent, inasmuch as I have had to govern Aden, which is a coaling station and port opposite the north-eastern corner, and also the islands of Socotra outside, and of Perim, a maritime station inside the strait of the Red Sea. I have had to do with the political affairs of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and especially the Consulate of Jeddah. Therefore, I have had some practical experience in relation to the question under discussion, and I cannot but express the hope that, whatever may be the result of this debate, whether it may lead to a Conference or not, whether we decide on stopping the slave traffic at its source, or on arresting it at its outlets, at all events it will go forth to England and to the world at large that the British House of Commons does, from the bottom of its heart, denounce this African slavery as the greatest of all crimes perpetrated under Heaven in this, the nineteenth century. I trust also that it will this evening register a vow that, as far as in it lies, it will do its very utmost to suppress this most inhuman and infernal traffic. This country has preponderating power in the north-west of Africa, and we are one of the several Powers among which the control of the central continent is divided. In the first place we have, most honourably to ourselves, created and maintained missionary establishments throughout the length and breadth of the country. These missionaries fortunately have friends in England who can make their voices heard within the walls of this House. We have establishments on the Zambesi, we have influence on the Congo, we have jurisdiction on the Gold Coast and on the Niger, we have domination over Egypt, and last December we resolved to keep Suakin. Whether our resolve in this latter respect was right or wrong, having decided to keep Suakin, we are bound to fulfil the responsibilities of that position, and the most important of these has reference to the Slave Trade. Now this hateful traffic exists from one end of that vast continent to the other, and it is said to be on the increase. To this description the southern part of the Continent under British influence or jurisdiction is the sole exception. It is most truly heartrending to read the tales, which are told, as I believe, with scarcely a tinge of exaggeration, of the horrors attending, not so much the Slave Trade, as the process of slave capture, and the bringing away of the victims from the interior of the country to the coast with a terrific loss of African life. From numerous regions in Africa, from the sources of the Zambesi, from the upper reaches of the Congo, where Livingstone once laboured, from the heart of the Dark Continent itself, from the sources of the Niger, from the shores of Lake Tchad, from the head waters of the Nile and its lower mid-valley, from the coast of Zanzibar—from each and all of these portions of the great African territory the blood of murdered Africans cries aloud to Heaven. We have listened to the testimony of African travellers, such as Speke and Grant, and Livingstone and Cameron—all of whom furnish ample evidence of the extent to which this abominable traffic prevails. Besides our power in Africa we possess much influence elsewhere. We have influence with Turkey, Arabia, Persia, and other Asiatic regions, and that influence we are bound to exercise in order to put down this nefarious trade which is carried on by the Arabs, a race which forms the most important factor in Africa. Born beneath the cloudless skies of Arabia, in a climate that nerves the physical energies, and hardens the character, they have left their arid fatherland and crossed the Red Sea to the fertile tracts of Africa. Thus they have acquired a domination over the whole of the Northern and Central Continent, which for centuries they have held. Not more surely does the Indian tiger track down and prey upon the deer, the antelope, and the gazelle than do these Arab hunters —I will not call them traders—pursue and prey upon the flesh and blood and muscle—nay upon the very lives—of these poor Africans. The Arabs constitute indeed a prime mover in most of the political movements connected with the African Continent. What is it that has disturbed the relations between the German Establishment near Zanzibar and the natives? The slave trade and the influence of the Arabs. What was it that made Egyptian rule impossible in the Soudan? The slave trade and the Arabs. What was it that nerved the soldiers of the Mahdi in the gallant resistance they offered to the trained discipline and scientific arms of our English troops? Why, the slave trade. Every one of the men who thus opposed us was either a slave holder or a slave trader, or both combined. These Arab hordes come swooping down like the simoom wind of their Arabian deserts, on the villages of the native races—carrying off the women and children when the men are away at work, so the men return home at eventide to find their cottages desolate. Or, haply, the Arabs, coming across the men when they are engaged in the fields, bear them straight away, leaving the women and children to mourn the husbands and fathers who will never return. What then happens we are too well acquainted with. The victims of both sexes thus seized and captured are marched first through the moist and temperate regions, where they are still in their native climate; then they are dragged across the dry and torrid portions of the country, where they sink and faint by the way, or are slaughtered to save the cost of transport. A remnant at last reaches the mid-valley of the Nile, where they are packed on board the river boats like herrings in a barrel, where most of them die of putrid fever, the result being that only about one in 30 of those originally captured are actually sold into slavery and sent to foreign countries. Now, Sir, we have heard from the hon. Member for Hackney that the real cause of the slave trade is the demand for slaves in Asiatic countries. The demand in the interior of Africa is very great and beyond control, and until civilization shall be spread throughout that continent, I know of no way in which it can be stopped, except, perhaps, in the neighbourhood of the British Gold Coast border, as mentioned by the hon. Baronet. But something may be done for Asiatic countries; and may I ask the attention of the House to this subject from a geographical point of view? In that regard we have two points at which we might stop the traffic—the mouth of the Red Sea and the entrance of the Persian Gulf. The Red Sea is like a bottle, of which the strait of Babel Mandeb is the neck. Inside the neck is the Island of Perim, which I have already mentioned. The Persian Gulf is also like a bottle, opening out into the Sea of Oman. Its neck is formed by a promontory of Arabia jutting out right opposite the territory of Mekran. Both straits are narrow, only a few miles in breadth. The necks of these two bottles could, if England chose, be stopped against the slave trade by her gunboats and cruisers. I may be asked why I did not do that when I had the power. When I was Governor of Bombay I never had at my disposal a sufficient maritime force for that purpose. We had but 13 or 14 vessels for all the East Indian Seas. The Member for Hackney, who spoke despondingly somewhat, mentioned a miserable force only of a very few gunboats. Of course, we could not check the slave trade without some maritime force being detailed for the purpose. If I had now placed at my disposal such limited naval force as I might ask for, I would undertake to stop any slaver entering the Red Sea or Persian Gulf, and if they do not enter there I do not see how these human cargoes are to be got into Asia. It may be said that between the mouth of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf there is a long stretch of Hadramant territory, but there are few facilities for landing on that coast, and we might almost certainly stop the slave trade there. There, too, is situated Muscat, where the ruler (as mentioned by the Member for Hackney) can be induced to co-operate. In the Red Sea there are the two ports of Massowah and Suakin. The former is in the hands of the Italians, whose co-operation may be secured, and the latter is in our own. Then there is the great slave market of Jeddah. The fact that it is a great slave market is one of the principal reasons that a British Consulate has been established there for the purpose of putting a spoke in the wheel of the slave traders, and nothing could be easier than for our gunboats and cruisers to bar the entrance to Jeddah. Much might be done in this direction by diplomatic negotiations in Asiatic countries where we have influence. Of course too much reliance must not be placed in Mahommedans in a matter of this sort; as observed by a preceding speaker, they are too apt to make promises which they cannot fulfil. I do not know whether there is any text in the Koran approving slavery, but it must be remembered that wherever Mahommedanism has existed, slave-owning also has prevailed. With regard to vessels sailing under the flag of France, it is important to come to an understanding with her; if we allow slavers bearing our flag to be searched, she might allow the same for slavers carrying her flag. In dealing with the slave trade, I may add that we require steam launches of small draught, so that we might pursue the dhows in shallow water and capture them. Certainly, as remarked by the hon. Proposer of the Resolution, we need legal power to treat slaver crews as pirates. As to arms, as mentioned by the hon. Member, it was shown in the debates of last December that, but for our prevention, Suakin would drive a roaring trade, the exports being human creatures, the imports being guns, shot, and shell! In conclusion, I desire to express the hope that the country may be assured, by the passing of some Resolution, that the House is unanimous in its practical detestation of the evil of the slave trade, and is determined to put an end to it so far as the means available to us will permit. The action taken in years past by Members of the Liberal Party for the suppression of the slave trade may be numbered among the most glorious traditions of the Liberal Party and among the brightest jewels of the Liberal crown. But I must not attribute to them a monopoly in a good cause. As my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London reminds me, there were heroes of humanity on the Conservative side of the House also. As these humane principles of the past generation seem to be still preserved by the Liberal Party, so they are also by the Conservative Party, and if the pleas for suffering humanity are sounded on the opposite side of the House, they find an echo from the Ministerial Benches.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The debate which has been raised on the Motion of the hon. Member for Poplar has been somewhat remarkable, as it has attracted an unanimous expression from all parts of the House. Such a debate cannot be without advantage, because, however desirous any Government may be to advance in the path in which their Predecessors have done so much, it requires, no doubt, a popular impulse to strengthen their hands, even in a national policy. Sir, although there has been little difference of opinion expressed the question has been regarded from many points of view. The hon. Member who introduced the Motion had, as has been justly observed, an hereditary right to take an interest in this subject, and my hon. Friend the Member for Devon, who seconded the Motion, has not this evening for the first time attempted to excite the interest of the House in the cause of the suppression of the slave trade. It is well that from time to time we should be reminded of our duties in this matter. The hon. Member for Poplar has kindly recognized the fact that Her Majesty's Government have not been indifferent to this cause; and he has referred to the despatch which Lord Salisbury addressed to the Government of Belgium in September last, and which was undoubtedly a fresh departure in this matter. Well, Sir, that despatch indicated a desire on the part of the Government to secure the co-operation of the other Powers who had previously been allied with this country in the suppression of the slave trade in a fresh endeavour suited to the times. The hon. Member, while approving of that step, referred to another matter; he touched upon the great step which was taken by the Government in the course of last autumn, along with Germany, for the more active suppression of the slave trade on the East Coast of Africa—namely, the joint naval operations in that quarter. I could have wished that the hon. Member had not dropped one sentence in which he expressed some want of faith in the sincerity of our allies. If, however faintly, that sentiment was expressed, the hon. Member subsequently answered himself on that point in the latter part of his speech, because he pointed out that Prince Bismarck had also sought the co-operation of the other Powers of Europe. I cannot understand with what justice we can assume for ourselves entire honesty, sincerity, and disinterestedness in our endeavours to suppress the slave trade if, at the same time, we throw doubts on the sincerity of other Powers. I do not know why we should be regarded as the only people sincerely desirous of suppressing the slave trade. Christianity and humane sentiments are not confined to ourselves, I suppose, and at all events, Her Majesty's Government could not have done otherwise than accept the co-operation which was extended to us by the German Government for more active operations on the East Coast of Africa. Now, Sir, the hon. Member referred to the hindrances to beneficial operations that have resulted from the collision between the German East African Company and the Arabs, and he has spoken of the Germans as an irritant influence in that quarter. I do not wish in the least to shrink from distinct reference to the subject. Let it be remembered that we have had great experience in dealing with Oriental nations, yet our contact with Eastern nations has not always been attended with success; but by long acquaintance with them we have been able to maintain relations with and to control Oriental Powers without humiliating ourselves, and so our new efforts at colonization may have met with more success than those of other nations. But it is natural that other Christian Powers should also have the desire for expansion and colonization; and when the great Empire of Germany was formed, it was only natural that the people of that Empire should feel a desire to form colonies as we had done. They are a kindred race to us, and there is no reason why they should not be as successful in colonization as we have been. In the British Colonies, where I have had the honour to hold a commission as Governor, I found the Germans among the most useful, enterprizing, and orderly of colonists; and it is natural to suppose that those who have done so well under our flag and under that of the United States should also form Colonies of their own which should become to their Empire a Germany beyond the sea. Let us hope that the troubles which have attended the first operations of the German East African Company will come to an end, and that they will be enabled to extend the blessings of civilization and commerce in that continent as we have to some extent been able to do ourselves. We may hope that the Imperial Commissioner who has gone there to control operations will be able to bring to an end the unfortunate collisions that have occurred. Now, Sir, the hon. Member spoke as if there had been, in consequence of these unhappy events, a failure of our operations on the coast, but that is far from being the case. Happily we have had as yet few troubles in the sphere of our own interests. It would be premature to speak of what might happen in the future among the excitable races we have to deal with; but at present there has been a good foundation laid for colonizing operations in East Africa by means of the chartered company which we have established there. And as to the suppression of the slave trade by means of our operations in concert with those of Germany, there has been an almost entire cessation of the seaboard slave trade for several months past. I believe Her Majesty's ships have visited between 600 and 700 craft on the coast within the last few months, and have not found a single slave on board. That shows that the more active operations which have been lately taking place have not been without result. The season is approaching in which the slave traders are usually more active, and their operations will require the close attention of our ships and their officers to prevent an increase in the slave trade. But these measures cannot be taken without great exertions and considerable expense. When hon. Members talk so easily of the suppression of the Slave Trade, and of occupying important points on the coast, they must remember it would require a larger number of Her Majesty's ships than could well be spared. These things must be done on system, and your net could not be so wide as to close a traffic which has gone on so long, and in which so many are, unfortunately, interested. Now, Sir, I do not like to omit noticing another point taken by the hon. Member for Poplar, and I hardly think it was worth his while to refer to the fact that, at the Congress of Berlin, the British Representatives declined to enter into the question of the Slave Trade with some people who went over to Berlin for the purpose of directing the attention of the Plenipotentiaries to it. Remember, their attention was really engrossed by other subjects, and that rendered the discussion of the Slave Trade inopportune. During the last 15 years Her Majesty's Government, of whatever Party, have given no reason to believe that there has been indifference to the hereditary duty of repressing and suppressing the Slave Trade—a matter in which we know no Parties. In 1871 there was an inquiry by a Committee of this House, and the result of it was the expedition of the late Sir Bartle Frere to Zanzibar, and a better understanding of the mischiefs of the Slave Trade than ever existed before. Following on that visit a ship was permanently stationed at Zanzibar, from which boats were continually sent to intercept slave traders leaving the ports of Africa. Although the *London* has been withdrawn, both from motives of economy and efficiency, it is an open question whether the system adopted since has been more satisfactory and, in the end, more economical than the system of having a stationary ship. In order to carry on the blockade of the coast against the exportation of slaves and the importation of arms, we have had to concentrate a number of vessels on that coast, which it is impossible for us to permanently maintain there; and therefore it is questionable whether it would be judicious again to have a stationary ship or some barracks on shore, from which swift vessels could go out to intercept the departure of the dhows from the mainland. Since 1873 there have also been conventions with Egypt and with Turkey for the entire suppression of the slave trade, and it has been acknowledged that this has conduced to very efficient results in the diminution of slavery in those countries. Something has been said as to the insincerity of the Ottoman Government in their undertaking to suppress the slave trade, and it has been pointed out that a large part of the Turkish dominions contains the chief market for the slaves from the coast of Africa. It is undoubtedly the fact that the Arabian coast is the great slave market, and that a large portion of it is under the protectorate of the Turkish Government. But I do not think that it is possible to hold the Turkish Government responsible for all the violation of the conventions in that respect. In a previous debate on this subject — I think in the month of November—I told the House that there had undoubtedly been an increase of activity on the part of Turkish officers in the neighbourhood of Jeddah to suppress the Slave Trade, and I am now glad to say that about ten days ago the Government heard of very active steps having been taken by a Governor in that district to discover where slaves were concealed who had been run across the Red Sea. A raid was made on Mecca, Jeddah, and some other places, resulting in the discovery of several hundred slaves, who received their manumission. Undoubtedly we have many difficulties both by land and sea to contend with. One of the great difficulties we have to encounter is the refusal of the French Government to join the other Christian nations in allowing mutual right of search and the capture of vessels under the French flag who are found to be engaged in the Slave Trade. The Treaty of 1841 between Austria, Great Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia for the suppression of the African Slave Trade was assented to by the representative of France; but the Government of France did not ratify the Treaty. France has always been jealous of permitting the ships of other nations to visit vessels flying her flag and, in the case of the Slave Trade, to exercise the right of capture. That is a very unfortunate circumstance, because there are great numbers of native vessels which obtain licences from French Consular Agents on account of the protection which the French flag legitimately gives, and which abuse it. The abuse of the French flag in the way of slavery is not a thing of yesterday. For half a century it has been a matter of frequent report and complaint. I believe that the French Government and people are by no means wanting in the sense of disgrace which attaches to their flag by this abuse, and I know that there are French Consular and Naval officers on the East Coast of Africa who were active in endeavouring to suppress the abuse. But, nevertheless, the fact exists that one of the great hindrances to the proceedings of the German and the British Naval officers on the East Coast of Africa has been the prevalence of vessels flying the French flag. They have only to display their papers to secure immunity from capture, and slaves have been landed in the Island of Pemba, and other places, within sight of the British and German cruisers. Something has also been said about the blockade not having been useful in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and having operated as a hindrance. That is a mistake. Had it not been for the proclamation of a blockade, according to the law of nations, we should have had no right to search French vessels, but the blockade having been established along the great line of coast, all vessels can be visited, and it is open to cruisers to seize any vessels having slaves on board, and take them into Zanzibar; and the result of that power has been to paralyze the seaborne Slave Trade on that coast. But other remedies are undoubtedly needed. The hon. Member for Poplar and others have pointed out the necessity of something much more vigorous being required to deter persons from continuing this cruel and devastating trade. It has been suggested that it should be made punishable as piracy to carry slaves, and that persons engaged in the trade should be sentenced to death. At present, as the House knows well, we have a Treaty with many nations which engaged us to declare the Slave Trade piracy, which gives us mutual right of search, and enables us to carry vessels found with slaves on board into port; but the traders can only be tried according to the law of their own country. In the United States men have been executed for the crime. It is highly desirable that the slave-trader should be punishable by the country whose ship has captured him and that the penalty of death should be attached to the offence, which involves not only murder, but the murder of many human beings for the enslavement of one. Then, again, it is exceedingly necessary there should be a general agreement; we should be glad, therefore, if the Powers of Europe could be induced to meet and deliberate upon the most suitable measures for the purpose which they have long had in common, and if the Government of France could be induced to join on equal terms with other nations and to surrender an immunity which does them no honour. The question of prohibition of arms into Africa is a very difficult question. Cardinal Lavigerie, whose zeal and spirit of benevolence all have recognized, has made a proposal that a corps of Volunteers, supplied with funds to the extent of £40,000, should operate under an International Committee on the line of lakes in Central Africa and interfere with the passage of slave caravans. I must say I think a proposal of that kind does more honour to the Cardinal's heart than to his head. It would be exceedingly difficult and dangerous to carry out. It was not endorsed by the hon. Member for Poplar in his practical speech, and no other Member of the House has given his assent to it. But it does not follow that because Cardinal Lavigerie's scheme in that respect does not commend itself as practical that something in some measure upon its lines may not be thought of. Personally, I think it is not by plunging into the heart of such a country with a corps large or small, which must be supported in case of disaster, that we can best cope with this enormous traffic. Slave hunting in the interior of Africa is of immemorial usage, and seems to be ingrained in the habits of the people. They prey upon each other, and, perhaps, as in the case of the freebooters of old, it is as much for wild sport as from motives of plunder that they engage in it. But it is so widely spread and so deeply rooted in their habits that it cannot be put down by any sudden movement. It must be sapped and mined; it must be approached by gradual operations, by the advance of civilization from many points with a settled purpose, and with common views on the part of civilized nations. We are now operating by means of powerful companies, managed by men of great ability and public spirit, who are animated as much or more by philanthropic motives as by the desire for gain, and the operation of these companies, I believe, will in a few years produce a great effect on the warlike and predatory habits of the tribes of the interior of Africa. Now, the despatch addressed by Lord Salisbury to the Belgian Government in September last has been referred to. There is no doubt that any real effective measures ought to be based on united action. We must have a consensus of international purpose, and that can only be attained by avoiding all international jealousies. Had Her Majesty's Government themselves proposed a Conference to deal with this subject, I think we might possibly have such jealousies. No such feeling whatever has interfered with our co-operation with Germany in the matter; but we might possibly have excited doubts in the minds of some nations as to our altogether disinterested motives if we had ourselves proposed a Conference. At all events, it seemed to Her Majesty's Government more probable that such a proposal would produce beneficial results if made by what I may call a neutral Power. Hence Lord Salisbury, last September, directed Her Majesty's Minister at Brussels to propose to the Belgian Government that they should take the initiative in getting together the Powers interested in the suppression of the Slave Trade, in order to deliberate as to further united measures with that object. The proposal was cordially accepted. The King and the Government of Belgium were perfectly ready to serve as an intermediary between the Powers. But, in the meantime, there occurred those unfortunate events on the East Coast of Africa which rendered the summoning of the Conference inopportune. It is, therefore, postponed, but not *sine die.* I think that the debate that has taken place to-night cannot fail to give a new impulse to the movement; and it was one of those impulses which, when supported by all Parties in the House, as this has been to-night, must produce a powerful effect in this country, and perhaps also abroad. The hon. Member for Honiton (Sir J. Kennaway) referred to the blockade of the East Coast of Africa, and hoped that it is approaching its end. I am glad to say that the objects of that blockade have been nearly attained. The effect of our vigorous measures cannot possibly but be felt. With respect to the remarks of the hon. Member for the Honiton Division, let me say that though it is obvious that good results cannot be expected from inferior steamers, whose approach can be discerned by the slave dhows, yet good service has been done by the native vessels which have been fitted out for that service. It is only too true that a number of vessels have eluded observation, and that a great deal more must be done before the trade can be stopped. It is also true that the evacuation of the Soudan has led to a revival of the traffic. General Gordon had suppressed the trade on the Upper Nile, but, unfortunately, since his death Khartoum has become a centre of the Slave Trade, and slaves are constantly being sent to the Red Sea. Valuable service has, indeed, been done by the enterprize and missionary zeal of Englishmen and Scotchmen in the neighbourhood of Lake Nyassa. The Government, however, unfortunately cannot guarantee these devoted men protection and succour; but we have expressed our interest in them, and we have, in their interests, represented to the Portuguese Government that they have claims upon us which we cannot disregard. The hon. Baronet the Member for Sussex has sadly earned a personal interest in African affairs. His allegations of participation in the Slave Trade of persons within our Protectorate on the Gold Coast will receive attention; but as to his remarks in reference to the action of Germany, I do not think it is necessary for me to say more than that I firmly believe it was our duty to join with Germany in vigorous efforts to suppress the slave traffic on the East Coast; and after the painful experience we have had, I trust we may proceed on better lines to the accomplishment of the good work on which we have been engaged. As to the losses suffered by British Indian subjects, we much regret these; but it was beyond our power, beyond the power of anyone, to prevent those who are engaged in peaceful avocations from suffering loss when warlike operations are proceeding. These British Indian subjects have earned, I believe, the confidence of all parties; and I make no doubt that when quietness and order is restored their influence will continue. The descriptions of the horrors of the Slave Trade we have heard are not, I believe, in the least overdrawn. Our efforts to stop the traffic on land may not be effectual; but certainly we can make successful efforts to stop the trade at sea. Every possible opportunity will be taken to prevent the massacres and cruelties which have made that sunny land one of the blackest spots on the face of the earth. In that way we shall perform the duty handed down to us by our forefathers, and shall fulfil the just expectations of the country, which expects Her Majesty's Government to carry on this holy cause. And now let me say a few words on the Motion of the hon. Member. I hope that he will recognize that Her Majesty's Government are in no wise hostile to it. As the Motion runs, however, it would be hardly in accordance with diplomatic usage. It would be more convenient, I think, and more likely to attain the object of my hon. Friend, if he would leave out the words after "steps" down to "devise," so that the Motion would read—

> "That Her Majesty would be graciously pleased to take steps to ascertain whether the Powers signatory are willing to meet in Conference for the purpose of discussing such measures for its repression."

If the hon. Member will be good enough to adopt these words, Her Majesty's Government will be very glad to accept the Motion.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Just a word or two in reply. I need hardly say that I am glad the Government have so cordially accepted the Motion; and certainly I agree to the amended form proposed, and anticipate that it will be accepted unanimously. As to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, I may notice one omission: he did not touch upon the question of the abolition of the status of slavery which we regard as one of the chief objects of an International Conference. I will only add that we recognize, as I am sure the country at large will, the intention of the Government to move in this matter, and that whether the Government make London the central home of the Conference or prefer to rely upon Belgium as an intermediary is to us equally satisfactory.

*SIR JAMES FERGUSSON: If I may be allowed, I would mention this omitted point to which the hon. Member has called my attention. I am afraid that there would be great difficulty in Her Majesty's Government proposing to Mahommedan countries to abolish the institution of slavery. Compulsory servitude of a domestic character is a different thing from the traffic in slaves, and these most important and necessary reforms must be gradual. We were unable to abolish slavery even in Her Majesty's Dominions without paying a large amount of compensation.

*SIR R. FOWLER (London): I only rise to congratulate my hon. Friend on the success of his Motion, and I trust it may bear fruit and be of great service to the cause of humanity. My hon. Friend has worthily upheld the traditions of his family, as his grandfather advocated the cause in this House for a long course of years.

*MR. DE LISLE (Leicester, Mid): It is too late now to take up another subject; and I may be allowed a few words. I would endorse the views expressed by the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Barttelot), and urge Her Majesty's Government to take energetic steps against the Slave Trade carried on at the Gold Coast. I may mention that some years ago, when I had the honour of serving in the Malay Peninsular under Sir F. Weld, there were districts under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen where slavery in a most revolting form was practised by the natives upon women. Although he was assured that to interfere with a system which had so long had legal sanction would probably lead to rebellion, the Governor of the Straits Settlements came to the determination, after full consideration, that it should be put down, and in six months, and without any great difficulty, the system of debt slavery for women was put an end to. Equally successful, I have no doubt, would be energetic measures on the Gold Coast; and I am sure the distinguished officer commanding there would be ready enough to give effect to the wishes expressed by Her Majesty's Government in this direction. As to other points, I may say I regard the suppression of the Slave Trade at Jeddah as of the utmost importance. If the Turkish Government cannot, or will not, use its influence for the suppression of the traffic, then a gunboat or two sent there, and preparations made to bombard the town, would, I am sure, have the desired effect. This infamous trade, especially the mutilation of youths of the male sex, without doubt, is fostered by the Caliph of the Mahomedan Empire, and, therefore, pressure should be applied to him, and the Sultan must be made to feel that his existence in Europe is simply tolerated with a view to the suppression of the Slave Trade. I sincerely hope Her Majesty's Government will induce France to act in conjunction with us in checking the trade in the Red Sea, and allow dhows carrying the French flag to be searched if suspected of carrying slaves.

*SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): With much pleasure I have heard the declaration of Her Majesty's Government as expressed by the Under Secretary, and I am sure the country will approve it. I congratulate my hon. Friend on the tone and spirit of the debate which has been manifested on both sides.

Question put, and agreed to.

(1.) Resolved, That in view of the present increasing and extending desolations of Africa caused by the Slave Trade, and also of the large responsibilities which European Nations have now assumed in respect to that Continent, the time has come when full and complete effect should be given to those declarations against the Slave Trade which were delivered by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and by the Conference at Verona in 1822.

(2.) Resolved, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to be graciously pleased to take steps to ascertain whether the Powers, Signatories to the Declarations against the Slave Trade, are willing to meet in Conference for the purpose of devising such measures for its repression as may be at the same time effective and in accordance with justice, and under the regulations of International Law.

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

Mr. De Lisle

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT (1885) AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): As time is short, I will only say that I have permission to state that Her Majesty's Government offer no objection to this Bill.

MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): I think we ought to have some explanation of it.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): I may, perhaps, say, shortly, that the Government see no objection to the Bill. Its purpose is simply to avoid the necessity of issuing two rates; but it in no way alters the incidence of the rate or the power now vested in authorities. Simply, it proposes that one rate may be levied instead of two, and is, in fact, the application of a principle that has been adopted in previous legislation.

Bill read a second time, and committed for April 4.

ALDERMEN (COUNTY COUNCILS) ABOLITION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. LONG: The Government cannot possibly accept the Second Reading of this Bill; and, looking at the time, I hope that no attempt will be made to proceed with it now.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I must press the Motion for Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be read a second time."

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 31; Noes 19.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Second Reading put off for six months.

And, it being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 8.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [April 4.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, *27th March*, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

A POINT OF ORDER.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Mr. Speaker, I wish to put a question to you upon a point of Order in reference to a Division which took place at an early hour this morning, upon the Second Reading of the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for Finsbury (Mr. J. Rowlands). The Division took place immediately before 1 o'clock on the Question that the word "now" stand part of the Question. By the time the Division was over it was past 1 o'clock, and the proceedings of the House came to a close. But I find in the Minutes circulated this morning the following entry, "Question put that the word 'now' stand part of the Question. The House divided:—Ayes, 31; Noes 69.—Words added." Now, Sir, I understood at the time that you did not put those words as a separate Motion on account of 1 o'clock having been reached. If that be so, I would ask that the Minutes should be amended so that before the words "on this day six months" be added it may be competent for hon. Gentlemen to move another Amendment.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is in error. I distinctly put to the House the Question "that the words 'on this day six months' be added."

Mr. CONYBEARE: What I wish to know is whether, on an occasion like that, before the words, "this day six months" are added, it is not competent for any hon. Member to propose a further Amendment instead of six months—say, two months or on this day fortnight?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The universal practice was followed, and such an Amendment as the hon. Member suggests would have been inadmissible.

THE "FROG'S MARCH."

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I wish to put a question to the Under Secretary for the Home Department of which I gave notice last week, and which I intended to raise on the Motion for Adjournment last night—namely, whether the attention of the Home Office has been called to the case of Samuel Mahoney who died on Friday last while being conveyed to a police station by what is known as the "frog's march." I am anxious to obtain an expression of opinion that in all cases of this kind it is extremely desirable that the body of the deceased should be examined by a medical man unconnected with the police. My object in rising now is to ask the hon. Gentleman whether it is now too late, even in this instance, to act, and direct that the body of Samuel Mahoney shall be examined by an independent medical officer?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart Wortley, Sheffield, Hallam): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has given directions that an inquiry should be made into this case, but the result of that inquiry has not yet come to hand. I will communicate to my right hon. Friend the substance of the remarks which have been made by the hon. Member.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I am much obliged, and I beg to say that I will return to the subject on the Motion for Adjournment this evening.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have a question to put to the noble Lord the Vice Chamberlain of which I have only given him short notice, and, if he prefers to give an answer to-morrow, I will put a further question then, although the case is very urgent. I wish to ask him whether it is true, as reported, that four cargoes of sheep have been shipped from Germany suffering from foot-and-mouth disease, and that they have been landed at four different ports in this country—Hartlepool, Grimsby, Deptford, and Hull? Can the noble Lord give any information as to the circumstances of the case?

THE VICE-CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount LEWISHAM, Lewisham): I regret to say that the facts, as stated by my right hon. Friend, are correct. I am not, at the present moment, in a position to make any further statement, but I will endeavour to obtain further information.

THE DEATH OF MR. BRIGHT.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand): I desire to refer for a moment to a subject which I am sure has been the occasion of great sorrow to every Member of this House. News has reached the House in the course of the last few minutes of the death of one of its Members, for whom every Member has always entertained the highest respect. I feel that in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), with whom the late Member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) was associated during a great part of his career, it would not be fitting or convenient that I should refer at any length to the misfortune that has befallen the country. Therefore, Sir, I desire to postpone any reference to the event until Friday next, when I understand the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian will be here in his place.

*MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Sir, I beg to express, on the part of my friends behind me, our entire sense of the considerateness shown by the right hon. Gentleman in postponing his remarks until the arrival of the only man, on this side of the House at least, who could give a full expression to the sentiment of deep regret with which we have heard of this incident. Unfortunately for us in this quarter of the House, it has been our lot to be divided from Mr. Bright on the great controversy of the day. But I am sure that, heavily as we have felt the weight and power of his opposition, it has never in the smallest degree impaired our gratitude, our veneration, and our affection for him. I believe the deepest feeling in the minds of many of us has been one of heartfelt regret that his last days should have in any degree been clouded or made less happy by division from the comrades and fellow-workers of a lifetime. We have lost a great orator. We have lost one who, in his day and generation, was a most wise counsellor. We have lost a true and faithful lover of his country.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): In rising to move in line 18 to leave out "29,000" and insert "28,000," I wish to avail myself of the opportunity of calling attention to the conduct of the Colonial Office in connection with the alienation of what I may call the last half million of square miles of land in South Africa which are available for the emigration of the poor of this country.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The observations which the hon. Member proposes to make on that topic will not be relevant to the present Bill.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: The Bill deals with the Vote for the Colonial Office.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in the Bill which applies specially to the Colonial Office. The only Amendment permissible is an Amendment for the reduction of the sum mentioned in the Bill.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: That is what I meant to move.

THE CHAIRMAN: But inasmuch as the money is not intended for any particular service, it would be irregular to enter into the discussion of a particular service.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Bill passed through Committee and House resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, to be read 3ª to-morrow.

REMOVAL OF WRECKS ACT (1877) AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 3.)

Order for Second Reading read.

*SIR E. BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill it will not be necessary for me to take up the time of the House by explaining the provisions of the measure. Everybody must realize how extremely important it is that no obstacle should exist that might in any way jeopardize or impede the great work of saving life at sea—a hazardous operation at all times, but most especially so at night, when lifeboats often have to go out to vessels in danger, in order to save the lives of the crews. When the Bill for the removal of wrecks was before this House in 1877 the question of the safety of vessels in navigable waters was alone before the House, and the question as regards the safety of those engaged in lifeboat work was, as far as I am aware, not discussed at all. The two sections of the Bill which related to the removal of wreck were Sections 4 and 5. Section 4 gave power to the harbour and conservancy authorities to remove wreck, and Section 5 gave power to the general lighthouse authority also to remove wreck. But since 1877 great strides have been made in the work of the saving of life around our coast, and I venture to say that public opinion is more than ever in favour of legislation of this character, and that nothing ought to stand in the way of the best measures for saving the lives of the crews of shipwrecked vessels. I hope that hon. Members have read the admirable speech which was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) last week, at the annual meeting of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, on the question of saving life at sea. In my opinion, it was undoubtedly a great oversight and omission that the Removal of Wrecks Act of 1877 contained no power for removing wrecks that were dangerous to the work of saving life—a work that our gallant fishermen and Coastguardsmen and others are always ready to undertake at the risk of their own lives, however great the danger may be. I feel very strongly that dangerous obstacles, such as wrecks either near the shore or in the vicinity of a lifeboat station or wrecks on outlying sands, should no longer be left as they now are to jeopardize the lives of the gallant men who man our lifeboats. As regards the question of what is an obstruction or danger to navigation is defined in the Removal of Wrecks Act, 1877. It is simply that—

> "Wherever there is a wreck or portion of wreck that is in navigable waters, supposed to be an obstruction or a danger to navigation, the authorities shall have power to remove it."

But if a vessel is wrecked in the vicinity of any lifeboat station around our coast and it is in such a position, either on account of the state of the tide or the state of the wind, that in some cases lifeboats absolutely cannot be launched until there is a change of the wind or a change of the tide, then I say that there ought to be power to remove such an obstacle. It is of no use to argue that a lifeboat can be launched so many hundred yards on one side or the other, because at many of the lifeboat stations it is absolutely impossible to launch the lifeboat except from a slipway attached to the lifeboat house itself. If a lifeboat is launched on either side of a wreck to try and avoid it, there are, in many places, still more dangerous obstacles in the shape of breakwaters, rocks, and other impediments, and therefore I contend that where a wreck is opposite a lifeboat station, endangering the lifeboat services, it ought to be removed. Then, as regards wrecks on outlying sands, that is another matter of very great importance, not only to the lifeboat service, but to the work of saving ships. There are many cases where a vessel in thick weather or a snowstorm is driven on a sand bank. It may be just on the very edge of the bank; a portion of the wreck may be in deep water, and if it is a wooden vessel, in all probability after the first two or three gales of wind it would be knocked to pieces and blown away. But that is not the case if the vessel is a composite or an iron vessel. In such cases it often occurs that the vessel may remain for years, not intact, perhaps, but with part of her ribs or stumps stuck out of water, and possibly only visible at dead low water. This is a source of very great danger, and I am informed that in many cases where a vessel has gone on the sand in the vicinity of one of these wrecks, the tugs in trying to tow off the vessel from the sand have been in very great danger. I have been assured by the master of a tug that it would be of great benefit if there were power to remove such wrecks from the edges of a sand bank, and that it would greatly facilitate the work of saving stranded vessels. I hope that every shipowner will consider that point if he has any doubt on the subject. I do not wish to speak entirely from hearsay, but I can prove my case by facts. Last September I went out in a lifeboat five miles from Great Yarmouth on the coast of Norfolk, to see the remains of a composite vessel—the *Andromeda*. I went out at dead low water, and the vessel whose remains I saw had been lying there for upwards of six months. I was able clearly to realize that if it had been a dark night with a strong spring tide running the lifeboat might have struck one of the ribs of this vessel and must have been lost. Even the lifeboat men themselves, although they might have had cork jackets on, must have been swept away and would have perished in a short time from cold and exposure. Perhaps I may be allowed to read the following, which I have received from the coxswain of the Caister lifeboat. The letter is dated December 25th, 1888, and the writer says—

> "We were out with our large lifeboat a few nights ago in a dense fog to the Cross Sand in answer to guns, but we could not find the ship. We crossed over the sand several times and all our fear was the wreck of the *Andromeda*, should the lifeboat have struck the wreck, with our crew of 20 men so far from the shore, what would have been the consequence? I have been looking at the wreck to-day with the glass from the boat shed, and it remains about the same as it was when you went out with me in the lifeboat. I know, dear Sir, that you are doing your duty in trying to get the wreck removed, and I should like to hear from you soon about the matter."

There are very strong reasons why the crew of this lifeboat should have called my attention to that wreck, inasmuch as in the year 1885, on the 21st of July, they heard signals of distress. It was perfectly smooth water, and in order to save time they did not launch the lifeboat, but put off in a yawl. After proceeding about two miles she suddenly struck upon a sunken wreck and immediately sank, and out of a crew of 15 men eight of the poor fellows were drowned. Yet only the previous winter these same men had saved the lives of the crew of that very vessel. I have no desire to give to this lifeboat station more praise than is due to it, but I may mention as a matter of fact that since 1858 this station, with two boats, have saved 1,143 lives. I may quote another station where there are well-known outlying sands of great danger—namely, Ramsgate and the Goodwin Sands. Since 1865, the Ramsgate lifeboat has saved 898 lives. The same may be said of many other lifeboat stations, and it shows how important it is that steps should be taken and power given to remove these hidden dangers. Let me remind the House that lifeboats are bound to put off at once. There must be no hesitation and no delay. They must go the straightest course, and on a dark night a green wreck buoy near a sunken wreck is of no use, because the crew would be unable to see it before they were on to the wreck itself. I have made inquiries of the Trinity Board whether there are any other means of enabling a lifeboat to avoid a sunken wreck. It has been suggested that the newly invented gas buoys might be put down, but it is impossible to carry out that arrangement all around the coast. I have been told that there is no means of getting over the difficulty except the one which I propose—namely, the amendment of the Act of 1877. As a matter of fact, the Trinity Board sometimes remove wrecks not in navigable waters that are within a few hundred yards of the buoys which show the navigable water. They have done so because they considered that although such wrecks were not within navigable waters strictly speaking, still the tugs in many instances had been in great jeopardy of being wrecked themselves in trying to get off vessels from the sand. I understand that some shipowners consider that I have no right to suggest that there should be further charges on the Mercantile Marine Fund in respect of this Bill if the House consents to pass it. At the present time the Mercantile Marine Fund is charged to the extent of £12,000 a year in respect of the saving of life, but the greater portion of that amount is paid in connection with the rocket service. Two lifeboats belonging to the Board of Trade are maintained out of that fund, and the expenses connected with the Removal of Wrecks Act, 1877, also came out of that fund. Now I do not think that if this Bill passes the charges imposed upon the Mercantile Marine Fund will be greatly augmented. There are not many cases in which wrecks would have to be removed, but from time to time such cases will occur. At present I know of six, five in England and one in Ireland, all of which are sources of very great danger. I do not believe that great demands would be made on the Mercantile Marine Fund, especially if the work were carried out in the summer time; by that means the expenses would be very much minimized. The Committee of Lloyd's have, I understand, written to Her Majesty's Government urging them to support this Bill. The whole of the pilots of the United Kingdom are strongly in favour of it, and I would suggest to the House that if it goes to a Second Reading the words in Clause 4, "of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution" should be struck out. I admit that it was an error to introduce that reference, because as a matter of fact there are two boats belonging to the Board of Trade, and thirty others belonging to voluntary associations. I am also ready to amend Clause 4 by adding at the end the words—"Provided that in the case of obstruction or danger to lifeboats no expenditure shall be incurred by the General Lighthouse Authority except with the previous sanction of the Board of Trade." I hope that that suggestion will satisfy my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, and I trust the House will realize the great importance of the work of saving life around our coast by reading the Bill a second time. I consider that every possible encouragement should be given to this work. In this, the greatest mercantile country in the world, we ought to be foremost in doing our utmost in saving the lives, not only of our own sailors, but of foreigners and fishermen. I have been asked why I have not provided for obstructions that are detrimental to other services besides the lifeboat service, and especially in connection with the fishing interest. I would remind those hon. Members who desire that such a proposal should be embodied in the Bill that fishing vessels do not pay light dues, and, therefore, it would not be fair to charge the Mercantile Marine Fund with that expenditure. With these remarks, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir E. Birkbeck.*)

*MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): My hon. Friend opposite has very clearly stated the reasons for this Bill, and I have great confidence that the House will consent to read it a second time. The proposal is altogether of a non-Party character, as I think will be evident from the names on the back of the Bill, for a more incongruous lot, from a Party political point of view, could hardly be got together. There is but one motive in regard to this Bill. On this we are perfectly homogeneous, and there is no personal or money interest in the matter whatever. The only desire is to help our seafaring population at a time when the services they are rendering in the cause of humanity should command the sympathy and respect of the people of this country. When a vessel is in danger these brave men go out to save the crew at the risk of their own lives; from this point of view I think the Bill should receive the approbation of this House. It would be carrying Conservatism to an altogether unheard-of pitch to advocate as desirable the retention, in the guise of ancient monuments, dangerous wrecks dotted around the coast. I am sure they are neither useful nor ornamental, and it must be evident without any argument whatever that the horrible skeletons of ships which have gone to pieces on our shores can be productive of nothing but danger to seafaring men. I do not think it is necessary to say more in order to induce the House to read the Bill a second time.

Mr. GROTRIAN (Hull, E.): In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol (Colonel Hill), who is at this moment engaged at the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, I beg to move, as an Amendment, that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I feel the difficulty of the position I am taking, having regard to the fact that I have to contend against some of the considerations which have been put forward very forcibly by the hon. Baronet the Member for East Norfolk (Sir E. Birkbeck) in support of the Bill. I may, however, be allowed to say that in every expression of opinion to which he has given utterance in praise of the action of the noble men who man our lifeboats I entirely concur. Their deeds have not only commanded the admiration of this country, but have presented a bright example to the rest of the world. I entirely support everything the hon. Baronet has said in regard to the desirability of removing any obstruction to the efficient performance of the duties of the lifeboat service; but I contend that there is no necessity for this Bill, and I think I shall be able to show that my hon. Friend has hardly made out a good case, apart from the sentimental considerations which have no doubt properly influenced him, and may possibly influence other Members of this House. At all events I hope that we shall give an impartial and a thorough examination to a Bill of this sort, which I shall endeavour to show, although it is apparently very simple in its clauses, is of a very wide and far-reaching character. The first question to consider is what the proposal involves, and whether there is any real necessity for it. I hope the House will bear with me while I quote the provisions of the existing Act of 1877 which is sought to be amended by the Bill of the hon. Baronet. It is an Act to facilitate the removal of wrecks obstructing navigation, and Section 4 provides that—

> "Where any vessel is sunk, stranded, or abandoned in any harbour or tidal water under the jurisdiction of a harbour or conservancy authority, or in or near any approach thereto, in such manner as in the opinion of the authority to be, or be likely to become, an obstruction or danger to navigation in the harbour, the authority may take possession of and raise, remove, or destroy the whole or any part of the vessel, and may light or buoy any such vessel or part until the raising, removal, or destruction thereof, and may sell, in such manner as they think fit, any vessel or part so raised or removed, and also any other property recovered in the exercise of their powers under this Act."

This provision is carried much further by Section 5, which says—

> "Where any vessel is sunk, stranded, or abandoned in any fair way, or on the sea-shore."

Of course, there is a consideration which I am afraid that hon. Members may have lightly passed over, and that is, if you extend the provisions for the removal of what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwickshire (Mr. Marjoribanks) calls "ancient monuments" where is the money to come from? At present, the removal of wrecks imposes a serious burden upon the Conservancy and Harbour Authorities, which authorities are charged with the removal of wrecks under the Act. In certain eventualities, my hon. Friend says, the Mercantile Marine Fund ought to bear the expense. I ask the attention of the House to the speech of my hon. Friend, and beg hon. Members to note that in a period of 11 years which has passed since the Removal of Wrecks Act was carried, my hon. Friend has not been able to obtain for quotation (with one exception) a single case where there has been an accident owing to the non-removal of a wreck, and I must say that if there had been any actual danger I think my hon. Friend would have been able to have obtained a list of such cases. I think that speaks volumes for my contention that every necessary provision is made by the Act of 1877. I will take the case of the Humber Conservancy Commissioners, who, at the present time, have no power to levy dues on shipping, or to raise the necessary funds for removing wrecks. The funds of these Commissioners are raised by private contributions from railway and dock authorities interested in the efficient navigation of the Humber, and I contend that if this Bill were passed it would involve very serious consequences to the Board. Then, again, in order to give an illustration of the practical and possible working of the provisions of the Bill, I may mention that in the Humber, on the north shore of the river at Sperm Point, the Hull Trinity

House authorities have for many years maintained at their own expense a lifeboat, which has rendered most valuable services indeed. That boat has a splendid record; but the Hull Trinity Corporation are not in favour of the Amendment proposed by my hon. Friend's Blll, nor are the Humber Conservancy, and their contention is that it is entirely unnecessary, by reason of the provision which already exists. On the opposite shore, at the entrance to the Lincolnshire coast, there is a station under the charge of the National Lifeboat Institution. On the shore, some few years ago there was a violent gale, and 33 wrecks took place. Those wrecks are driven high and dry at certain states of the tide; and if the Bill is passed it would be contended that those wrecks, which took place so long ago, ought to be removed. The consequence would be that very heavy and unnecessary expense would be thrown on the authority. I hope it will be quite understood that, in moving that this Bill be read a second time this day six months, I am not in any way antagonistic to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution—an institution which I cordially support, and which I believe merits the eulogies cast upon it. But I do ask the House seriously to consider, before allowing the Bill to become law, whether, in the first place, it is really necessary—whether the demands are not entirely met by the provisions of the Act which it proposes to amend; and, in the second place, to remember that no provision is made for the very serious extra liability it will throw upon Harbour Conservancy and other authorities.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford): I beg to second the Motion.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Grotrian.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. PENROSE FITZGERALD (Cambridge): I will endeavour as far as possible to answer the speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, but it is somewhat difficult, because he has read out to the House the commencement of two sections of the Act of Parliament which bears upon the case, stopping short at the actual part which has any bearing whatever on the Bill of the hon. Baronet now before the House. Our contention is that the Bill is necessary for the purpose of removing wrecks in shallow water, where such wrecks "are not in the way of navigation," which are the obstructions provided for by the Act of 1877. The wrecks to which this Bill will apply are not directly in the way of large vessels, but they are in the way of all small vessels by day and by night. They are sometimes even barely visible in the daytime, and at night their whereabouts can be indicated only by lighting, which is more costly than blowing them up with dynamite. Some of these wrecks are directly in the way of the launching slips of the Lifeboat Institution, and can only with difficulty be avoided. Not very long ago there was a wreck lying almost directly in front of the step of the Cromer lifeboat. The boat had to go within a few fathoms of it every time she was launched, and at night, or when the weather was thick or snowing, I would defy any coxswain steering the lifeboat to avoid coming into collision with it if chance took him in its direction. It must be remembered that in rough weather on the East Coast the lifeboats get out to save life by crawling round the banks and over the shoals, and that, therefore, old shark's teeth wrecks lying in these places are a source of great danger. The boats could not put to sea in deep water such as you have on the West Coast. We are told that the Mercantile Marine Fund is not in a flourishing condition—and it is not likely to be when hon. Members who have to pay to it can come here and get the fees reduced—but I would point out that the object this Bill has in view was laid down as one of the purposes of that Fund. It is provided by Sub-section 5 of the 418th section of the Act that the Mercantile Marine Fund, subject to any prior charges, shall be chargeable with maintaining lifeboats, crews, and equipments, and affording assistance towards the preservation of life and property in cases of shipwreck and distress at sea. That clause distinctly contemplates a proper service of lifeboats on the coast. Thanks to the benevolence of our fellow-countrymen and countrywomen, we have a perfectly voluntary association such as the National Lifeboat Institution, whose expenses, roughly speaking, are £70,000 a-year. But if we had not got an association like that, which is voluntarily looked after and voluntarily supported, I am certain that the country would expect that somehow or other the Mercantile Marine Fund should be called upon to do that which is now done by a voluntary institution. All we ask in this voluntary association is that you should do one of those things which you are called on by Act of Parliament to do—namely, to remove these ribs, these skeletons of wrecks, which are a danger to our lifeboats. I could give you dozens of cases where such danger exists, and I have no doubt that the President of the Lifeboat Institution could give you hundreds. We should be quite ready to accept Amendments to strike out the words "Royal National Lifeboat Institution," so that the Bill should read "or to lifeboats engaged in lifeboat service." We are aware that many other boats do go out to save life, such as ordinary fishing-boats, luggers at Deal, whale-boats at Cork, and the boats of private corporations, such as those at Hull. But I hope the House will not run away with the idea that there is no fund out of which to defray these expenses, and that there is no danger to be got rid of.

SIR SAVILE CROSSLEY (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I desire to support the Bill, which is urgently needed in my constituency in Suffolk, a constituency possessing a large fleet of fishing boats, and also a most dangerous coast. It is earnestly desired by all classes, not only by the lifeboat men, but the fishermen. and all classes connected with the coast trade and the owners of the harbour at Lowestoft. The Great Eastern Railway Company are not opposed to any small burden which would be placed on them for the further protection of the brave men who risk their own lives to save the lives of others. I trust the opposition to the Bill will be withdrawn, as the hon. Baronet opposite and the promoters of the Bill have proved their case so clearly.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, South-East): I should like to point out to the House that this Bill has the almost unanimous assent of the pilots on the East Coast of England; and that it is regarded as of the utmost importance by my constituents who navigate the North Sea and the Thames. These wrecks are the greatest danger to our fishing industry. There are numbers of them on the coast of Essex, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade will do what he can to help the passing of the Second Reading of this most useful Bill. The matter with which it deals is not a sentimental one, but a very practical and serious one, as those who are at all acquainted with the navigation of the Essex coast can testify.

MR. LANE (Cork Co., E.): I desire to say a few words in support of the Bill rather to show the unanimity of all parties in the House in its support than to add any additional argument to those already given. The hon. Member for East Hull (Mr. Grotrian), the House will admit, has done his duty to his absent friend with conspicuous ability, but I do not think he has given us sufficient reason why we should not pass the Bill. The merits of the measure are so self-evident to the House that it is almost unnecessary that any further time should be occupied in the discussion. I do not think it has ever been my lot to witness a measure received on all sides of the House with such unanimity as this has been. The whole body of Irish Members who usually sit with me on these Benches are in favour of the Bill, because they think it a move in the right direction. It is a measure that will meet a very great want that arises all round the coast of Ireland, and will not, in my opinion, add materially to the burdens already pressing on the Mercantile Marine Fund.

MR. GROTRIAN: As the hon. Member who has charge of the Bill is willing to agree to certain Amendments in the measure, I now ask leave to withdraw my Amendment to the present Motion.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): This Bill, which proposes a very small amendment of the existing law, appears to commend itself to the almost universal approval of the House. The Mercantile Marine Fund is now in a better condition than it was in some time ago, and is better able to bear additional charges which may be placed upon it; but the expenditure under that Bill ought to be limited strictly to cases where absolute danger exists; and, remembering the important charges to which that fund is now subject, I am sure the hon. Mover of the Bill will not wish that it should be burdened unnecessarily. I do not think that the hon. Member for East Hull has in any way injured the interests which he wishes to serve by withdrawing his opposition to the Second Reading. Those interests are perfectly well able to protect themselves. I will ask the hon. Member for East Norfolk to postpone the Committee stage of the Bill to enable me to communicate with the Lighthouse Authorities, in order that any minor Amendments may be made in the measure if necessary.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. J. C. STEVENSON (S. Shields): In asking the House to read this Bill a second time, I have to say that on a recent occasion I was defeated on a similar Motion in a full House only by a majority of seven, when, instead of my Bill being read a second time, an abstract Resolution moved by the hon. Member for Northampton was carried, in favour of relegating the question of Sunday closing to the decision of the inhabitants of particular localities. It might have been supposed that the hon. Member for Northampton upon that would have taken the usual course of bringing in a Bill to give effect to his Resolution, but the hon. Gentleman has not done so. What I would press on the House at this moment is this—that the only practical method of dealing with this matter — if it is to be dealt with this Session at all—is by passing the Second Reading of this Bill, and amending it as may seem desirable in Committee. Those hon. Members who desire to see any step taken towards the settlement of this most urgent and important question ought to support the Second Reading. Of course, hon. Members, like the right hon. Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck), who are not desirous that any attempt should be made to settle the question, will support the rejection of the Bill. I, however, remind the House that a very eager interest is being taken in this movement by large classes throughout the country who are anxious to promote an improvement of the social condition of the people. The more democratic the Constitution has become the more interest has been taken in questions of this kind, because the people know better what is for their own interest and for the interests of their poorer neighbours. All the organizations for social improvement which are, happily, so numerous in the country look to this Bill as the first step in the way of temperance reform. Our Christian Churches, however much they may differ on points of doctrine, are unanimous in support of this reform of Sunday closing, and I ask the House whether it is going to lose another year, or whether it is going to seize the only opportunity that is likely to be presented this Session of dealing with this measure? And I would remind the House that by reading the Bill a second time to-day, it will have precedence, under the new Rules, over all Bills which have not been read a second time before Whitsuntide. The Government, by introducing clauses dealing with the Sunday Liquor Traffic into their County Government Bill of last year, admitted the importance and the urgency of the subject; and I, therefore, call upon them to support the second reading of the present measure. My hon. Friend the Member for Barnard Castle (Sir J. Pease) has a Bill on this subject on the Paper, but it is so far down that it has no chance of being considered. He proposes the same principle with considerable modifications and exceptions, and I presume he will vote for the Second Reading of my Bill, with a view, if possible, to inducing the House in Committee to adopt some of the modifications he suggests. The hon. Member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Talbot) has a Resolution on the paper, which would be adverse to my Bill; but he will not have an opportunity of moving it. He proposes a different remedy for the evil I desire to deal with; but I remind the hon. Member and my hon. Friend the Member for Barnard Castle that the only way to meet the growing wish of the country for some settlement of the question is to give the Bill a Second Reading. Now, I should be content to secure Sunday closing in any way; but I should prefer to have it as it has been given to other parts of the United Kingdom. I would rather proceed by means of a general measure than county by county, parish by parish, or town by town, as the case may be. Sunday closing began in Scotland 35 years ago. I am not going to argue the success of the system in Scotland, beyond stating that there is not a single voice raised in Scotland against it; and quoting what the late Lord Advocate stated on the subject on the 9th of May, 1888, on the Second Reading of the Public Houses (Ireland) Saturday Closing Bill. Lord Advocate Macdonald said—

> "No Scotchman, in whatever part of the House he sat, could hesitate to concur in the statement that restrictive legislation for Scotland had had a most beneficial effect on the community. The hon. Member for South Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor) had said that the greater the restrictions were, the less their effect was. He challenged the accuracy of that assertion, for which there was no foundation whatever. No measure passed for the abolition of Sunday trading in any part of the United Kingdom could be tested as to whether it had failed or not until it had run a far longer course than the Irish Sunday Closing Act had run. . . . Any attempt to remove the restriction would be met with practical reprobation on the part of the whole community of Scotland. . . . The bogus clubs in Glasgow, however much harm they might do, could only affect an infinitesimal proportion of the population, out of all proportion to restoring the old state of things under which public-houses were open."

It was the proved success of the Scotch Act which justified this House in passing the Irish Bill. In 1883 the Government of the day, in which my right hon. Friends the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) was Chief Secretary for Ireland, proposed to make the Irish Act perpetual, but the Bill for that purpose was then dropped. It has, however, been renewed year by year, and now the proposal is to make the Act perpetual, and to take away the restrictions which were at first imposed. Let me quote what the present Chief Secretary said to a deputation which waited upon him on the 1st of February of this year. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I am one of those who certainly at the time was disposed to attach considerable weight to the objections which many conscientious men feel to the original Act—objections, I mean, founded upon the possibility of this Sunday Closing Act leading to illicit drinking, illicit distillation, and all the other arguments we are familiar with, and which, I think, have been alluded to by one or two speakers in the course of the afternoon. But those arguments have been refuted by the most conclusive of all methods of refutation. They have been refuted by experience. It has become clearly manifest that every man who has had the opportunity and the desire impartially to examine the results of this legislation in Ireland during the ten years in which it has been in force has been driven, willingly or unwillingly, to the conclusion that that legislation has conferred vast benefits on the population, and that it should under no circumstances be allowed to lapse."

A remarkable fact is that this legislation has always gone forward, and never backward. Defects have been discovered; abuses have been observed; but they have only led to inquiries into the operation of the Acts, which have resulted in a strengthening rather than a weakening of the law. We have heard a great deal of the effect of the Act in Wales. I do not know whether I ought to go so far as to describe the agitation in the Principality as of the nature of a scare, but certainly it has come very opportunely in view of to-day's discussion. No doubt much reference will be made to-day to the letters of Lord Aberdare, a statesman for whom we have all great respect, but I am anxious to hear what Welsh Members will say. I certainly should be very much surprised if the proposal for a repeal of the Welsh Closing Act came from any Welsh Member. As far as I can judge, from what I read, there seems to have been a deliberate attempt in Wales to break down the Sunday Closing Act, and it appears also that the law has not been properly enforced by those who have the duty of administering it. We had many Petitions in 1888 from Wales in favour of passing an English Sunday Closing Act. For instance, there were Petitions from nine Town Councils, including Cardiff, Beaumaris, Denbigh, and Aberystwith; 11 Boards of Guardians, including Cardiff, Wrexham, Carnarvon, Holyhead, and Carmarthen; 7 Local Boards; 66 School Boards; in all 93 representative bodies, responsible for good order, relief of pauperism, and the education of the people in Wales. I think that is much more important than the writings of one newspaper, which I understand has always been hostile to the Act. I understand the Welsh Members are perfectly willing that the operation of the Act should be fully investigated. Of the result I have no fear. I am unwilling to occupy the time of the House, but I feel compelled to make a quotation from a letter which I had from Dr. Rawlings, a medical man of Swansea. That gentleman says—

> "As a medical man in practice here for nearly 23 years, a member of the Board of Guardians for 15 years, and now for some time past a member of the Watch Committee, I have had abundant opportunities of judging of the effects of this law. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that it has been a very great boon to hundreds who once spent their Sundays as hangers on at public-houses, who are now sober and thoughtful and most grateful for the Act. They rejoice that for one-seventh of their time they are saved from the temptation the public-houses once offered them. . . . Many of the more reputable publicans, who at first resented the interference, are now thankful for a quiet Sabbath. . . . The contrast in the main street is most marked. I can well remember how the public-houses would be crowded on the Sunday evening; and, whatever statistics may say, there must have been much more drunkenness than now when people have to go a good distance to get drink."

Now, I have great misgiving as to what may be made of statistics, and, with regard to the particulars as to offences connected with Sunday drinking of which so much has been made, we had it the other day from the Under Secretary to the Home Department (Mr. Stuart Wortley) that the comparison of the three particular years with the three succeeding years could be of no value whatever, because in the latter years the statistics were framed on a wider basis. As a matter of fact, such figures ignored a number of considerations upon which we can judge whether the Acts have been beneficial or not—mere police court results ignore the benefit to the family of a man going home to his Sunday dinner without the ordeal of the open door of the public-house: they ignore the liberation of barmen and barwomen, and often boys, from the intolerable bondage of seven days' slavery a week. The working men of this country have succeeded in obtaining a Nine Hours Act, but the *employés* in public-houses work precisely double that number of hours. Then we hear a great deal about the *bonâ fide* traveller, and upon this point let me quote again from the letter of Dr. Rawlings. That gentleman says—

> "Our trouble is chiefly with that legacy of the Licensing Act, the *bonâ fide* travellers clause, but the nuisance has been grossly exaggerated. If, at the outset, the magistrates had taken up the position they are taking up now, since Lord Aberdare's letter, we should have had little of which to complain. Men who had journeyed three miles were permitted to go from house to house in the Mumbles until they were drunk, and then, perhaps, on their way home picked up as drunk and disorderly. In this way the evil, such as it was, was concentrated at the Mumbles, but the rest of the 80,000 or so of the population was at peace. . . . The County Magistrates are now interpreting the law, as they should have done at the first, and the borough stipendiary has also announced a view on which he intends to act which has already greatly reduced the evil. . . . The Act has been respected by an overwhelming majority of the people, and has been an unspeakable blessing. . . . Any inquiry will result in abundant testimony to its beneficial effect, and to the remedying of weak points in the existing Licensing Acts."

Then he tells me that a few weeks ago the Town Council of Swansea passed a Resolution, without discussion, in favour of the English Sunday Closing Bill. Now, Sir, I do not attempt in this Bill to touch the Licensing Acts. These need amending, as Lord Aberdare, in his letter of the 5th of March, shows. Lord Aberdare says—

> "I must not be taken as agreeing with you in attributing the increase of shebeens at Cardiff and its neighbourhood, of which your correspondent has given so appalling an account, wholly or even mainly to the Welsh Sunday Closing Act. . . . The repeal of this Act, and the restoration of the former hours during which public-houses could be lawfully opened on Sundays, would not, so far as I can judge, have the slightest effect in diminishing the evil, however much it might tend to reduce the number and extent of others. . . . The lower strata of the population cannot be worse than those in Glasgow and Dundee, where, in spite of some evasion, the Sunday Closing Act is effectively enforced."

If there are to be any closing times we must have the difficulty of the *bonâ fide* traveller. Would you go back altogether to the 24 hours' opening without any restrictions whatever? There can be no doubt that this is a matter which is deserving of the earnest and early attention of Parliament, and I sincerely trust it will be taken in hand by Her Majesty's Government, because it is one which a private Member would not be able to deal with in the same way, nor with the same hope of success, as if it were undertaken by the Government of the day. I shall not attempt to occupy any further the time of the House, as I feel that this is a case which does not require much argument, and it will not be very long before the constituencies will fully inform their representatives of what are their wishes on this matter. I will only, therefore, in conclusion, put before the House the case of the publicans themselves and their families, who, under the the present system, are deprived of that home privacy which is so much valued by the rest of the community, and to whom one day of rest and quiet in the week will come as an almost priceless boon. I have already spoken of the persons employed in these houses, and with regard to them I ask the House whether any case of public necessity and convenience has been made out that can be held to justify so monstrous an anomaly as this—that while the law forbids Sunday trading in the necessaries of life and other commodities it shall continue to allow an exceptionally hurtful and dangerous trade to spread its temptations before the people on that one day of the week when, owing to the leisure it affords, the public are most liable to be brought under its evil influence. I beg, Sir, to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. J. C. Stevenson.*)

*MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): Sir, in moving the Amendment which stands in my name, I have no desire to repeat the arguments which I was called upon to employ when, some three months since, I addressed the House on a similar occasion; but after listening to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Shields (Mr. Stevenson), I am very much afraid I shall be compelled to break through that limitation; because, in the course of his remarks, the hon. Gentleman has practically reproduced almost everything he said when this question was last before the House. I must, however, state at the outset of my remarks that there is a noticeable exception in the speech to which we have just listened. The hon. Gentleman has made no reference whatever to London or the large population contained within the Metropolitan area. In December last he intimated that he was prepared to exclude the population of London from the operation of the Bill, and that he was ready to accept exceptions in favour of the large towns, so that this great measure of Imperial legislation would, after all, be confined to small districts in the country. How the hon. Gentleman can reconcile his speech on the present occasion with that which he delivered only three months ago, I am at a loss to understand—it surpasses my humble comprehension. I regret exceedingly that the hon. Member is not now in his place, though no doubt he is engaged in a much more agreeable occupation than attending the debates on this Bill. But the hon. Gentleman made use of words to the effect that his case did not require much argument. I agree with the hon. Gentleman entirely, because from the beginning to the end of the speech we have just listened to, as well as the speech he delivered in December last, he never for one single moment approached the real issue of this question. That is the great fault which I have to find with the hon. Member and his friends. They shrink from this test. What are the grounds on which this legislation is asked for in the numerous Memorials and Petitions which from time to time find their way into this House? I have been a Member of the Petition Committee of this House, and have had opportunities which very few other hon. Members have had of seeing what the value of these Petitions is. They are all, for instance, in one common form. Most of them were written out by a particular individual and sent out around and about the country to receive what signatures they can get. I do not wish to use any word in reference to them which may be called un-Parliamentary, but if the House will allow me to use such a word as "humbug," I would say there never was such humbug in the world. Every one of these Petitions begins by saying "Whereas the Sunday drinking in public-houses is a special source of intemperance, immorality, and crime." That is the proposition which the hon. Gentleman is bound to prove, but towards proving it he has not said a single word. Neither in his speech today nor in the speech he delivered in December last has he attempted to make out this important part of his case by showing how, or in what way, the limited opening of public-houses—six hours in the country and seven hours in London — is a special source of intemperance, immorality, and crime. Nor do we find any attempt to prove it in the few meetings which have been held in favour of Sunday closing, and here I would observe how very few and far between those meetings are. The resolutions which have been passed are all couched in very magnificent language, and roundly denounce Sunday trading and all interested in it, but yet there is no attempt whatever made to prove the case by anything like reliable evidence. My opposition to the Bill is based upon my own evidence and my own common sense. I have been living in London a great many years, and I have not seen any of those orgies—those disgraceful, revolting sights about which teetotallers speak so much, as being witnessed after 12.30 on Sunday afternoons. In the North of England, in the district with which I am politically connected, there certainly are none of those sights, and I can speak with equal positiveness of a district in the South of England where it is my fate to reside for a considerable portion of the year. All these allegations are nothing but the inventions of fanatics in order to frighten excellent and well-meaning people who do not care to take the trouble to inquire and ascertain the facts for themselves. It was a matter of common observation, which led myself and others to make still further inquiries, and the statistics which were laid on the Table on my Motion last year fell like a bombshell in the camp of the hon. Member and his friends. These statistics very conclusively showed that there was no extensive system of Sunday drinking. It is a little curious to note with what importance the Sunday closing supporters look upon statistics when they are in their own favour—that is, when the results of the Saturday night drinking is included in Sunday drinking. The moment, however, Saturday night drinking is excluded, the statistics tell a very different tale, and now, according to hon. Gentlemen, are utterly unreliable. Well may they think so, because they cut away a large proportion of the ground from the feet of the supporters of the Bill. I am not at all surprised to see hon. Gentlemen attempting to discredit these statistics, but I think the Home Office are quite able to explain their own figures. I have, thanks to the Chief Constable of Allerdale, in Cumberland, in which my constituency is situate, obtained a continuation of the statistics for 1888. Allerdale contains a population of something like 60,000 people, including a very large number of miners. In 1888, in the whole of that large population, only 69 persons were arrested on Sunday for drunkenness, whereas on the other days of the week 774 persons were arrested. It is thus conclusively shown that there are a much fewer number of persons intoxicated on Sundays than on weekdays. I ask, then, is it reasonable that all the public-houses should be closed in that district simply because 1 in 69 of the people is arrested for drunkenness? Then, Sir, in the case of Wales, the hon. Member remarked that the instance of Wales had occurred very opportunely. I quite agree with him; I think it has occurred most opportunely. But, in regard to the statistics, the hon. Member seemed to suggest that there were some *mala fides* on the part of the Commissioner. He ought to recollect, however, that these statistics were only laid on the Table of the House by the Home Office in the latter part of last year, and that there was hardly any time for the *Western Mail* to make the necessary inquiries. But Wales was the great power upon which the hon. Member and his friends relied so lately as last December. The hon. Baronet (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) then said—

> "The Welsh Sunday Closing Act was working admirably, and was there any earthly reason why Wales should not enjoy the blessing of being sober, and why should they not extend the same blessing to England?"

The hon. Member for Boston (Mr. Atkinson) said—

> "He was informed by ministers of religion, magistrates, and others in Wales, that the Sunday Closing Act passed for that country had been a great success."

And the hon. Member for Cardiganshire (Mr. Bowen Rowlands) said—

> "The Act had not had fair play in Glamorganshire, but in the rest of the Principality it had been a decided success."

But this idol which the hon. Members set up as to the success of the Sunday Closing Acts tumbled down and broke to pieces so soon as inquiry was made. In a circular delivered to me this morning, there is a false statement that—

> "A disgraceful attempt is being made to discredit the Welsh Sunday Closing Act by a manipulation of Parliamentary Returns."

I do not suppose the hon. Member for South Shields, with all his enthusiasm, will back up, but will repudiate, such a statement as that, because it is a severe charge, and one which reflects upon an excellent friend of mine, Lord Aberdare. I hold in my hand a Report entitled "Lord Aberdare's Challenge to the *Western Mail*," which shows clearly that illicit trading has greatly increased in Wales, while in England there has been a diminution; for in England there has been a diminution of 38 per cent. of the persons proceeded against for illicit dealing, while in Wales there has been an increase of 41 per cent, and taking Glamorgan alone the increase represents more than 100 per cent. That is one of the magnificent effects of the Sunday Closing Acts. Then the hon. Member said something about the attendance at the Sunday service, and how persons were prevented from attending public worship. If you look at page 35 of this pamphlet you will find that a police sergeant reported to the Commissioner—

> "I have not been twenty times to public worship altogether since the Act came into force, for no one knows what will happen on a Sunday."

That is a material answer to the question about attending Divine Service. Then at page 158 I find that Captain Colquhoun, the Chief Constable of Swansea, strongly recommended the partial opening of public-houses on Sundays. The hon. Member (Mr. Stevenson) quoted a letter from a doctor practising at Cardigan; but in this matter we have to look at the evidence of unimpeachable witnesses of position. And that is what I have done. Who are more likely to give straightforward evidence on such a question than the police officials, and it is to them we must go for information in this case. Captain Colquhoun states—

> "That the convictions for week day drunkenness in 1888 were fewer by nearly 200 than those of 1882, while those for Sunday offences in 1872 had only once before been exceeded."

Captain Colquhoun is a far better witness in this case than the doctor, whose evidence may be tinged with superstition and fanaticism. Then we come to Carmarthenshire. There the Chief Constable "unequivocally condemned the Act, which had doubled the amount of drunkenness. Before its introduction, three or four cases only of Sunday drunkenness occurred during the year. Now, however, he said, the figures were running up at an appalling rate." Then in Glamorgan, Superintendent Thomas, the officer in chage of the district, "declared that the immediate effect of the Act had been the production of a considerable increase of Sunday drunkenness." Round and about Cardiff, Superintendent Wake, the chief police officer of the division, described the Act "as the very worst piece of legislation which the police had ever been compelled to enforce." In the Merthyr and Aberdare Valleys, where there are no clubs, "shebeens are numerous, and the 'small cask' industry flourishes. This is the home of the 'belly-can,' an ingeniously constructed vessel manufactured for the sole purpose of assisting in the evasion of the law." Then Superintendent Thomas, Deputy Chief Constable of Glamorganshire, and chief of the police in the Merthyr and Aberdare district, said, in his opinion, the Act was a failure. There was much more Sunday drinking now than before the Act became operative. Then the Report says—

> "Colonel Lindsay, by virtue of the position he occupies as the Chief Constable of Glamorgan, the premier county of the Principality, undoubtedly takes rank as the leading police officer in Wales. 'The Act was passed,' he says, 'to reduce the extent to which Sunday drunkenness prevailed—instead of which, it has produced quite the contrary effect.'"

I cannot, for the life of me, understand how this evidence can be resisted. The only witness whom the hon. Member has produced is this doctor at Swansea, of small weight against the important and necessarily impartial testimony of these police officials. The hon. Member talks about *bonâ fide* travellers and about the bogus clubs; but these will always exist; they are a consequence of the Acts; for you cannot, by legislation, stop drinking, even if you suppress clubs or increase the distance of the *bonâ fide* traveller from three to four or five miles. The hon. Member never referred to this district of Wales; but I have here a picture of what is called a "belly-can," and I only wish it could be photographed and placed in the Library, and thus show hon. Members to what shifts

Welshmen are reduced by the legislation of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I am very sorry the Member for the Rhondda Valley is not here. He probably knows all about "belly-cans," though I do not mean to insinuate that he ever carried one. Now, those who live in Cardiff know that the "belly-can" is saddle-shaped, and is carried by men and women, generally the latter, full of beer under their clothes when running the police gauntlet. The average-sized can holds about four quarts. There are also "side-cans" which can be tied over the ribs. The main idea is the same in both designs. A Merthyr tinman has experienced a pronounced revival in trade since he took to making this paraphernalia — sometimes called "John Roberts" — of the Sunday drinker. But that is not all. The Commissioner says—

> "Now we pass on to another and more aristocratic method of providing Sunday drink. The small cask industry is in an exceedingly prosperous condition in the Merthyr district. Evidence of the fact is visible in many forms. First, many of the grocers advertise the casks as a speciality. Within a stone's throw of the Police Station, one of the grocers displays on a Saturday in front of his shop, 50, 60, and sometimes even a 100 empty casks. Frequently heavily-laden wagons are encountered on the highways engaged in the work of distribution."

These are the expedients which have been resorted to to evade the Sunday Closing Act in Wales, and this is the state of depravity to which the hon. Member and his Friends have brought the larger portion of the population of Wales, and to which he and they are desirous to reduce England also. Lord Aberdare's letter has appeared in the newspapers, and I shall not trouble the House with it. My Friend, Lord Aberdare, supported the Welsh Sunday Closing Act because he thought he was doing the right thing, but now he is sorry to come to the conclusion that the whole thing is a failure, and if a proposal were made for a repeal of that legislation in the House of Lords, he states that he would vote for it. I do not know that there is a more upright and single-minded man. He is always open to conviction. I had a conversation with him yesterday, and he said that he most absolutely thought a great mistake had been made in Wales. Really it seems to me that, so far as that part of the case is concerned, the evidence is conclusive. Lord Aberdare, who has gone fully into the matter, regards as proved the proposition which I bring before the House, that, so far as Wales is concerned, the Sunday Closing Act is a positive failure. Then the hon. Member for South Shields says that the limited number of hours during which public-houses are open is a special source of the evils which are complained of. That proposition I have disproved. But another proposition which, in my humble judgment, is untenable, is that with regard to Sunday rest. Those who are engaged in public-houses would rather be excused, I believe, from coming under the hon. Member's proposal, by which they would lose a day's pay. But that is mere speculation. I would, however, venture to submit to the House that the hon. Member is not consistent with himself. Why does he not practise what he preaches? Why does he not stop the Sunday employment of waiters at the Clubs? Because it is not personally convenient. That is the reason. Why does he not legislate to stop railways, and omnibuses, and cabs on Sundays? Then there is reference made to the general desire of the community for this legislation. I deny altogether that any such desire exists. I say that no evidence has been adduced by the hon. Member of any such desire. On the contrary, I can show conclusive evidence that there is no general desire in London to close the public-houses on Sundays. Sir, the hon. Member (Mr. Stevenson), when he made a speech in December last, said he would be willing to drop out of the Bill the 4,000,000 inhabitants of London. Is the hon. Member going to prevent persons going down on Sunday to Greenwich, or to Hampton Court, or Richmond, as *bonâ fide* travellers, from obtaining refreshments when they go there? Is that legislation to propose in the 19th century and in a civilized country? The hon. Member was very cautious about leaving out the Metropolis last December. And how about the large towns which he was willing to exclude? Yes, he was too liberal. He was not strong enough to try coercion on the subject. But he appears to have been called over the coals for the speech he made, so to-day he has left out all allusion to London and the great towns. Then reference has been made to Petitions. Most of them proceed from one body after they have found their origin in small Nonconformist or Dissenting communities. [*Cheers*] I am very glad to hear those cheers, because they prove my proposition—namely, that the larger general intelligence of the country will have nothing to do with this matter. I represent a very intelligent constituency. In that district there has only been, in the course of several years, one Petition, signed by about 46 people, and some of these signatures were doubtful. But the hon. Member was wise enough to stop that time. He did not say anything about the canvass. After canvassing six months they can only find 800,000 of the population of England who favour this legislation.

> "There was a meeting held in Manchester last month. I have the report. It was a meeting of the Central Association for stopping the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sundays. There was nobody there, and scarcely anybody was heard of except the hon. Baronet (Sir W. Lawson). The annual report submitted that 'Sunday closing continued to work satisfactorily in Wales.'. . . The total receipts for the year were £2,149, as against £2,298 in 1887."

There is even a deficit, and that is the result of the efforts of the Central Association. At that meeting the Rev. Canon Stowell said—

> "They would not receive a mutilated measure. They would neither exempt London, nor would they remit a question of Imperial importance to the decision of the County Councils. Their cry was, 'The Bill, and nothing but the Bill.'"

I should like to know very much where the general desire is. I am quite at a loss to know how any such conclusion can be come to. Now, what is the real position? I do not think myself that the question of temperance or intemperance has anything to do with it at all. An hon. Friend of mine in this House, distinguished by his sound sense, hit the mark when he said the other day, in charging a Grand Jury—

> "It has been a stormy question for years, but unfortunately it has always been made a political question."

And that is the very great cause, almost the main reason, of this proposal. I entirely endorse that opinion. It has always been my opinion, and I am not expressing it in this House for the first time. I am sorry, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby is not in his place. I do not know whether it is out of order to refer to an hon. Member as a weathercock; if it is, Sir, I withdraw the expression; but I do not know if there ever was such a political weathercock, except, perhaps, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton.

*SIR GEORGE TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I do not know to what the right hon. Gentleman refers when he uses such language towards me. I may say I have voted for the Permissive Bill almost every Session since I have been in the House.

*MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: I am quite willing to withdraw the expression. But still I think the word "weathercockism" is particularly applicable to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I cannot understand why support should be given to this, an Imperial Bill, by those who, like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, supported the Durham Sunday Closing Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has voted against Local Option so recently as last December; and I cannot see how his action in this matter can be defended. I can only attribute it to the desire to secure the political support of a certain number of hon. Members. I cannot understand right hon. Gentlemen supporting those Bills and now supporting Imperial legislation, with regard to which localities can have no voice. Then there is the hon. Member for Morpeth, who was a supporter of those Bills. I should like to ask him and other Members who are connected with trades unions, why they do not get up a strike against public-houses and all publicans who do not close on Sunday? If they did that, it would finish the matter, and there would be no necessity whatever for legislation. They, however, do nothing of the kind. Then there is the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth. I never knew a man who was more inconsistent. Only the other day the hon. Baronet went to support Mr. Beaufoy, who, it seems, is a producer of British wine. The hon. Baronet observed that he wished Mr. Beaufoy did not sell British wine, and he wished nobody would drink it. Well, so do I, and I also agree with the hon. Baronet that they would be a great deal better if they did not drink it. The hon. Baronet said he went there to support Mr. Beaufoy because that gentleman was in favour of Local Option. [Sir WILFRID LAWSON: Hear, hear!] Exactly, but the point is that the hon. Baronet was not in favour of Imperial legislation. I do not know that Local Option in this matter is so very much deprecated on this side of the House. I believe there is a large majority in the House in favour of it, and I know that a great number of my political friends have voted for it. But what we are now dealing with is Imperial legislation, and the question which the hon. Baronet ought to have put to the candidate he went to support was, "Are you in favour of Imperial legislation? Are you in favour of legislation that will put a stop to your own trade?" The hon. Baronet is altogether opposed to the publicans, but while he is opposed to the publicans he is not in the least degree opposed to the men who supply the publicans. The men with whom he appears on the platform are the producers. I should like to hear what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle has to say on this matter. He is a supporter of Sunday closing, although he does not practically carry it out himself. With regard to Wales, I believe that an influence is exerted there by Calvinist and Methodist ministers which is not to be found in any other country. There is no Welsh candidate who dare call his political soul his own, for it is entirely in the hands of these Nonconforming ministers. I should like also to hear the hon. Member for Denbighshire (Mr. O. Morgan) speak on this subject. I am very much afraid we shall all come round to the view so well stated by Mr. Justice Grantham, that political necessity is at the bottom of all this agitation. I should like to see the controversy carried on divested of all political elements; and I should be very glad indeed if Her Majesty's Government could see their way to granting some independent tribunal to investigate this question. I saw a paragraph in the newspapers this morning to the effect that the Government had made up their minds to grant a Commission to inquire into the Welsh Sunday Closing Act. I do not know whether that is true, but if it is, I should hail it with the greatest possible satisfaction. I have always been the strongest possible advocate for temperance. [*Laughter.*] The hon. Member for Barrow (Mr. Caine) has no right to make a denial of that sort. I have a right to say, for myself, that I am quite as temperate a man as he is. My view has always been to decrease drunkenness in this country by persuasion and force of example, and not by coercive measures, which only drive people to do things contrary to law. This has always been my view, and I have endeavoured as far as I can to enforce it. It is with that object that I now move the Amendment which stands in my name.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to second the Motion.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Cavendish Bentinck.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): I should not have intervened in this discussion but for the fact that a great part of the debate has turned on the operation of Sunday closing in Wales. But, before I go further, I wish to enter my very emphatic protest against the allegation of the right hon. Gentleman that the Welsh people are in any way under the thumb of, or subservient to, their religious ministers. The reason why the ministers of religion are held in such high esteem in the Principality is simply because they are in accord with their congregations to an extent hardly to be found in other parts of the country, and I venture to tell the right hon. Gentleman that the Members for Wales are also in accord with their constituents on this subject. Now, Sir, if it be true that the Government are about to institute a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, it behoves us to speak with a certain amount of reserve upon this subject. But I do ask hon. Members not to accept too readily all they hear on this subject. There is not only a great deal of feeling imported into it, but there are also very large pecuniary interests concerned. In such cases men are apt to believe not only what they wish to believe, but what it is their interest to believe. Statistics have been quoted, but they are unreliable, and other statistics have been published which point to different conclusions. For instance, those published by the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Mail* give an exactly opposite result to those given in the *Western Mail*, as a result of inquiries made in all parts of Wales. It is said that proceedings under the Licensing Acts have increased since the Welsh Act was passed; but that increase has been inevitable, being due to the fact of the Act having been passed. Then the opinion of Lord Aberdare is quoted; but remember Lord Aberdare said there was ground for a full inquiry into the subject. Mr. Justice Grantham has also been quoted against this question being made a political question. I desire to speak with respect of the Bench of Judges, but I feel bound to say that Mr. Justice Grantham owes his elevation to the Judicial Bench as much to his political opinions as to his professional reputation. He was a strong opponent of the Welsh Sunday Closing Bill when in this House, and he appears to have carried his political prejudices with him on to the Bench. How is it, if the Act is such a failure, that the working men of Wales have expressed an almost unanimous opinion in favour of it? No doubt it has failed in some respects, but that is not because it has gone too far, but because it has not gone far enough. The question of bogus clubs is one which the magistrates might easily settle, and, if the matter were left to the County Councils of Wales, as it ought to have been, canany one doubt how it would have been settled? In the Border Counties the men get drunk in England on Sundays, but are arrested in Wales, and so Wales gets the credit of them. The remedy for that is not to repeal the Welsh Sunday Closing Act, but to pass one for England. Max O'Rell, in one of his books, says that the only places of public resort open in London on a Sunday are the churches and the gin palaces, and he adds that, on the whole, the devil has the best of it. In my opinion the gin palaces, so far from being the last, should be the first places of public resort to be closed on Sunday. Can you consistently close places for innocent recreation, such as libraries, museums, and public galleries, and allow gin palaces and dram shops to remain open?

*Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I have not spoken in the House on this important subject before to-day, and am unwilling to give a silent vote, because I must oppose the Bill, though I know that it is supported by many Gentlemen with whom I generally act, and who might naturally expect me to vote for it. Looking at the Bill, I observe that its enactments go far beyond its title. It is called a Bill to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday. It enacts that any public house in which they are sold during the week should be altogether closed on Sunday, which is quite a different thing. The Bill appears to be based on two principles. First, the duty of enforcing the observance of the Lord's Day; and, secondly, the duty of enforcing temperance. I claim to desire both objects as much as any Member of the House, but I doubt whether it would be wise or practicable for Parliament to use its powers to effect these objects by legislation. If the Bill be based upon the duty of observing the Lord's Day, I ask why it is a greater breach of that duty to sell wine or beer on a Sunday than to sell tarts or cigars? If it be right for the sake of the Lord's Day to stop the sale of one class of goods on that day, we ought to stop the sale of them all. It may be said that it is already unlawful to sell anything on Sunday, and the crime of doing so is punishable by a fine of 5s. under the Lord's Day Observance Act passed in the reign of Charles II. True; but this Bill does not propose to impose a similar fine on the sale of beer, &c., but to punish the publican who sells these things on a Sunday, or indeed, who keeps his place open on that day even though he does not then sell them, by closing his house altogether, and in fact ruining him. If, then, the Bill be based upon this ground we must treat all commodities alike and close all shops and taverns on Sunday whether alcoholic drinks be sold in them or not, and ruin the shopkeepers who venture to open them. If the Bill is based upon the duty of enforcing temperance, then that is no reason for stopping at Sunday, and public-houses ought to be closed on every day of the week, for, from the temperance point of view, it is not more important to prevent drunkenness on Sunday than on any other day. Therefore, as I cannot support the closing by law of all taverns and all shops on Sunday or the total prohibition of selling alcoholic drinks on every day, I cannot vote for this Bill, which closes entirely on Sundays certain houses, because these drinks are sold there on other days. But the Bill allows alcoholic drinks to be sold on Sunday to lodgers and to *bonâ fide* travellers. It thereby abandons principle, and admits the considerations of convenience; and I inquire whether there are not many others whose convenience requires our consideration besides lodgers and travellers. There are thousands of people in every large town who would suffer very great inconvenience if all taverns were entirely closed. Rents being high, a married man cannot afford a house, but lives in two or three rooms. He has no convenience for keeping beer, and he has no place into which to ask a mate to come and talk with him on the leisure day. If we entirely close the only place of public accommodation, we drive these men to the corners of the streets or to the village green in all weathers. I ask what right have we Members of Parliament, who have our dining-rooms, our drawing-rooms, our cellars, and our clubs, and have plenty of room in which to see a friend and give him a glass of wine or beer, to say to our poorer neighbour who has not these conveniences, "You shall not use the only place available for your purpose." We shall be laying a heavy burden upon their backs, while we do not ourselves touch it with the tips of our fingers. This Bill therefore seems to me to be class legislation of a very objectionable kind. Experience shows that the natural desire of men to chat together and to take a glass of beer or wine while doing so is not quenched by a law preventing them from gratifying it in a particular way; and if you do shut the publics, men will find for themselves other means of getting what they want. Instead of taverns open for a limited number of hours on Sunday, under police supervision, we shall have clubs open all day, and perhaps all night, without any supervision at all. You may call them bogus clubs, and blame the magistrates for not putting them down; but there is no reason why clubs with a small subscription should not be as genuine as the Carlton or Reform. You cannot close clubs; you cannot prevent two men from combining to buy a bottle of wine or spirits and drinking it together—and, if two, why not three, or thirty, or 300? In 1885 I had a large Bible-class comprising over twenty men—sergeants of the police, mounted police, the second man at the railway station, small shopkeepers, head gardeners, and skilled artizans—of whom several were teetotalers. They discussed the question of Sunday Closing in my presence, and unanimously came to the conclusion that it would do great harm to the cause of temperance to put an intolerable burden such as I have described upon thousands of working men. If he have no club, a man will take home a small cask of beer or spirits on Saturday afternoon, and he and his wife and children will drink it up on the Sunday, and you will have a whole family tipsy instead of the one man who went to the public by himself. This may not appear in the statistics, because a man who gets drunk at a public has to go home through the streets and chance the risk of being taken up as drunk and disorderly. The whole family may get tipsy at home without being found out. A relative of mine, a wealthy lady living at Cardiff, who has for twenty years devoted nearly all her time to visiting among the working classes in that town, assures me that this is the case, and that the effect of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act on the habits of the people, especially the wives and children, has been appalling. She has no interest in any brewery or tavern, and her evidence is unimpeachable, and I consider it of far more value than any statistics, which can be easily manipulated. It is stated that the working classes desire the change in the law. I do not believe that this desire is genuine. Of course, weak fellows who live in vice will throw all the fault on the tempter, and try and persuade themselves that if there had been no temptation they would not have sinned, and they say they would like Parliament to remove all temptation. The thing is impossible! and what a weak, nerveless race of men we shall produce. All the virtue of self-control evaporates when it becomes compulsory. There are two ways in which the working men may now close publics on Sunday, if their desire to do so is genuine. If they will not go into public-houses, they will close of themselves, and if they are too weak for that, let them try boycotting all publics which have a seven day licence. If even our leading unions would strike against all publics which open on Sunday, seven day licences would soon be things of the past. It seems to me that the wants of different parts of the country vary greatly, and if this matter is to be dealt with at all it had better be remitted to the County Councils, and power be given to them to deal with the question, district by district, or village by village, after taking evidence as to the wants of each locality. I doubt whether total compulsory closing will ever be advisable or possible. Men will have some excitement to relieve the dulness of their lives, and as long as they know of no way of enjoying themselves other than by drinking, drink they will. A hundred years ago people of the higher classes had few tastes and amusements, and they used to drink. When I was at Cambridge, to get tipsy at a Bump supper was a common thing. My sons tell me that now such a thing is almost unknown. We are educating the masses; we are trying to give them better houses; we are gradually improving their condition and tastes, and, in my opinion, steady progress in these directions will do far more for temperance than legislation of this character. In a pamphlet which reached me this morning, written by the hon. Member for Northampton, I observed an able argument to prove, from a citizen's point of view, that it is unwise for the State to do for working men what they can do for themselves; and a very different man from the hon. Member, the Bishop of Peterborough, showed us last Sunday, in the Chapel Royal, that it injures Christianity for the State not to recognize the distinction between sins and crimes. To profane the Sabbath is a sin; for the State to enforce its observance by restraining men from doing what they like, is considered a violation of religious liberty by those who are not Christians, or do not believe in the Lord's Day. At the present time there is a fair compromise between these opposing opinions, which works very well. Upset that compromise by stringent restrictions upon liberty, and there will be a revulsion, and you will have absolute licence. Therefore, in the interests of Lord's Day observance, as well as in the interests of temperance, I feel bound to vote against this Bill.

*EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I should not have taken part in this debate if it had not been for some observations made by hon. Members opposite. They say that the working classes are not in favour of Sunday closing. Now, I have just been returned as a Member of this House. During the contest, I in the strongest possible manner said I should support Sunday Closing, and my views on this point were placarded on the walls by my opponents. Notwithstanding that, I was returned by a large majority, and therefore it is certain that, in some parts of England, at any rate, the working classes are heartily in favour of the Sunday closing movement. It appears to me that the hon. Member opposite is not in favour of Sunday Closing of any kind. With regard to the argument that Sunday Closing would increase the evil of drinking at home, I maintain that the great evil that has to be met is that of treating in public-houses. It is this treating each other that leads to so much drunkenness. I desire to see any legislation with regard to Sunday Closing applied to the clubs of the rich as well as to the public-houses of the poor. I belong to the National Liberal Club, as well as to a working-man's club in the East End, and I should like to see Sunday Closing legislation applied equally to both, and I should like clubs throughout the country treated in exactly the same manner as licensed premises, and then licences limited to six days a week. I also wish to know why London should be treated differently from the country districts in reference to this question? The hon. Member opposite has said that no steps should be taken to minimize the temptations to drunkenness, and he drew a distinction between sin and crime. There can be no difference of opinion on the fact that, unfortunately, England is suffering from a national vice which affects all conditions of life, and particularly that backbone of the country—the working classes. I have laid it down as a principle that I will vote for anything that will tend to limit the hours of labour on Sunday. The hon. Member has referred to the case of omnibus drivers and conductors, but I should be disposed to limit the hours of labour on Sundays for all classes, and if I bring in a Bill to do this in regard to omnibus drivers I hope I shall have the support of the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: Certainly not.

*EARL COMPTON: It is not only the omnibus men and the conductors who suffer, but it is also the hundreds of men employed in the stables and having charge of the horses which are worked in the omnibuses on Sunday. For the reasons I have given I shall give my hearty support to the Bill, and I gladly take this opportunity of expressing on behalf of a large majority of my constituents their hearty support of Sunday closing.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I listened with great attention to the hon. Member for South Shields, and I greatly admire the earnestness with which he advocated his cause. But, Sir, we are now in a very good position to judge of this question, for the House of Commons has the advantage of knowing what has been the effect of the operation of Sunday Closing Acts in Wales and in Ireland. We know to what straits people have been driven, and with what inventiveness they apply themselves in order to go behind the Act. We have heard a good deal about a certain apparatus called a belly can. I remember having read about a certain knight-errant who made war on wine sacks; perhaps we shall now have a modern Cervantes making war on these belly cans. We have seen that the Acts in operation are a failure, and we have had the argument adduced that more whip should be applied. But, Sir, I wonder how the hon. Member would like it if that growing sect, the vegetarians, should attack the eating of meat on Sundays. I think his indignant British soul would rise in revolt against such tyranny as would forbid the eating of meat on Sundays, or, indeed, on any other day. Now, Sir, I deny most emphatically that the Sunday Closing Act has been a success in Ireland, although I am proud to say that drunkenness has diminished in that country owing to the effect, not of the Sunday Closing Act, but of the advice of the priests and the general tendency of civilization towards sobriety. If there is any decrease in the amount of drinking in Ireland, it is on the days when the public-houses are open, and the increase in drunkenness occurs on the one day of the week when the public-houses are shut. In 1874, four years before the passing of the Irish Act, there were in the districts where the Act was in force 68,478 cases of drunkenness before the magistrates; whereas in 1882, four years after the passing of the Act, there were in the same district 72,650 cases of drunkenness, making 4,172 cases more in those portions of Ireland to which the Act applied. On the other hand, in those parts of the country to which the Act did not apply there were, in 1874, 32,932 cases of drunkenness, and in 1882, only 19,019 cases, showing a decrease of 13,913 cases in those parts of Ireland where the Act did not apply. These figures show the weakness of the contention that the Act has done a great deal towards increasing sobriety in Ireland. The hon. Member has referred to the Report of the Select Committee which sat last year to consider the effect of the Sunday Closing Act in Ireland. Ah, Sir, let me tell the House about that. I opposed the composition of the Committee the very first day it came before the House, because I saw the Government were putting upon it a preponderating number of Members who had pledged themselves to carry legislation in the direction of Sunday closing. That Committee sat upstairs, and selected as their own Chairman a learned Member of Her Majesty's Government; and they took certain evidence. The Chairman, the Solicitor General for Ireland, a Gentleman learned in the law, a Gentleman who had declared himself in favour of Sunday closing, a Gentleman who is capable of, and is accustomed to sifting, and weighing evidence, in his draft Report advised the Committee not to recommend the House to extend the operation of the Sunday Closing Act in Ireland. But what did this remarkable Committee do; this very Select Committee, composed of such Gentlemen as the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell)? They proposed a Resolution which ruthlessly swept aside the Report of their own Chairman, and recommended the

House to extend the Sunday Closing Act, although that was against the evidence adduced before the Committee. The day after the Committee was formed I had a conversation with an hon. Friend of mine who had been appointed a Member of the Committee; and will the House believe it—the hon. Gentleman, before there was one word adduced before the Committee—before, indeed, the Committee had met—sat down in a facetious moment and wrote for me what was to be the Report of the Committee? What he wrote did become the Report. Referring to Wales, the hon. Member for South Shields (Mr. J. Stevenson) said that at present there seemed to be something like a scare in the country. Now, what is a scare? A scare is a sudden fright. Is there a sudden fright in Wales? No. The state of things which exists there and which has converted Lord Aberdare, is the same thing that has existed ever since the Act was put into operation. Many years ago those who are the friends of the temperance cause, and those who desire the welfare of the people, have been obliged to use almost the same language as that which was used by Judge Grantham the other day. At a meeting of the St. David's Total Abstinence Society which was held at Cardiff many years ago—the meeting was attended by the late Mr. A. M. Sullivan, and Dr. Hedley, the Roman Catholic Bishop, was in the chair—Father Richardson, alluding to the drinking going on on Sunday, said—

> "A more terrible sight could not meet the eyes of a clergyman than the scenes which were to be found in such places. The room was full to suffocation; there was a cask in the corner of the room, another stowed under the stairs, and probably another elsewhere. The neighbours handed their jugs over the back-yard walls, and they were supplied more freely than they could be in a public-house. They saw young girls sitting on the knees of young men, with their arms round their necks, and both the girls and the young men the worse for drink. Not only that, but little children were taken into the room and dosed with beer until they became drunk. The next thing was the clubs. They were rendezvous, not of friendship, and not places of honest recreation, but dens of terrible drinking, and sometimes gambling. The men went in on Saturday night, and remained until two or three on Sunday morning. Then they went home and rested over their bout of drinking, when they again returned to the club, and remained until three or four on Monday morning. He was surprised that the wives of the men did not go and pull down the club-room and demand their husbands. This was the result of Sunday closing. The clubs had sprung up in consequence of there being no place where the people could go and enjoy themselves. . . . . He signed a Petition in favour of Sunday Closing in Wales, but his experience had changed his opinion, and he now felt that no Act of Parliament could make people sober. If they shut up one place another would open, and a man who wanted to get drink would get it some way."

We hold that a curtailment of the rights of the people, and restrictions on free trade in drink lead to worse evils than those you attempt to remedy—to shebeening, to home drinking, and to club drinking. That is the evidence in Wales. What is the evidence in Scotland? The Rev. Dr. Munroe, of Glasgow, has said—

> "A great source of crime and misery was the introduction of shebeens into the town. At the time the Improvement Trust commenced its operations there were shebeens in the town, but they were few; while at the present day there were districts in the town—some actually in the property of the Town Council itself—where every house was a shebeen. Without enlarging upon the subject, he might allude to a double block of houses. In these two blocks there were living in a kind of decent way before the demolitions began about 200 souls. There was a mixture of good and bad in it then, but the good predominated. Now, however, if you excepted a few who lived on the ground flat, where there was a little shop or two, and took the upstairs people, all were bad. The residents were not living there now in families, but in schools. Every one of the houses in the two blocks upstairs was a shebeen; almost every one of them was a brothel. In that place there were at least 200 criminals, and it was unsafe even to pass it."

But I have even better evidence than that from Scotland. Speaking of the ten o'clock movement in Scotland the Chief Constable of Stirling says—

> "I wish I were in a position to report favourably of its operation. With very few exceptions hotel-keepers and publicans have complied with the law, few attempts having been made to sell after 10 p.m., and in some respects the effect has no doubt been beneficial, inasmuch as the streets are now more nearly clear between 10 and 11 o'clock. This gives to those who are not out-of-doors after 11 o'clock the impression that much good has been done. I am sorry to have to report that that is only where the mischief begins. Bottles of liquor are purchased and taken to private houses, and drunken orgies are indulged in frequently to 2, and sometimes 3, o'clock in the morning. Young people of both sexes are thus brought in contact with vice which they might otherwise have escaped. Nor is this all. Shebeening, which was comparatively unknown in this county, is being discovered in several parts of

the county, with the result that if there are any fewer assaults, breaches of the peace, and cases of disorderly conduct committed than there were before, there are now more committed in the early hours of Sunday morning. This is not a mere matter of opinion—unfortunately, we have experience of it in nearly every town in the county.

There is another matter to which I wish to refer. Our feelings, are harrowed by appeals on behalf of those who serve in public-houses. We had evidence before us last year from the very class of people on whose behalf the hon. Member for South Shields appeals to-day, and that evidence convinced me, at least, that these people had no grievance whatever. There is no man who would not be more inclined to reduce the hours of labour than myself, but these people told us that they have more time at their disposal than any other class they were aware of. They said that not only had they hours in the days to themselves, but they had a whole day holiday, and if they were obliged to serve a few hours on Sunday they were more than compensated by the leniency with which they were treated by their employers in other respects. What right have we to impose our will on these servants? If they choose to go to this work, they have a perfect right to do so. Neither have we a right to impose our will on the people with regard to drink. Lord Bramwell says—

> "If even it is within society's right to close the public-houses, is it fair, is it just, is it expedient, because some take it to excess, that it is to be denied to millions to whom it is a daily pleasure and enjoyment, with no attendant harm? The glass of beer is taken from fifty men because one of them will take more than is good for him."

I have considerable experience, not only by reason of the fact that I served on the Committee upstairs, but because I have dwelt amongst the people all my life. I prefer that you should have no necessity for a club; I prefer that a man should not be compelled to drink at home, and perhaps, therefore, to set a bad example to his family. I prefer to leave the matter to the respectable publican, whose character and interest are alike a protection to the public. I oppose this Bill because it is based on false notions of freedom, and will open new ways of evil which will most assuredly lead to the destruction of morality instead of those ways which you wish to close up.

SIR H. SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): I have not now for many years taken part in these discussions, but I will yield to no man in my wish to promote the temperance of the country. As a Chairman of Quarter Sessions, who is constantly brought into contact with that crime which is produced by drunkenness, I have seen enough to strengthen my hands in supporting any action which would be likely to produce an increase of sobriety. Perhaps in past years I have done something in that direction, because the commencement almost of the legislation of past years was the bringing of the beer-houses under the control of the Magistrates, which was a measure practically introduced by me. The six days' licence I can claim as my own, although it has not produced as much good as I could wish. The power given to Magistrates to transfer licences from one district to another was a measure which I thought also would have done much in the direction of diminishing intemperance. I am, however, satisfied by the experience of the past that if you attempt to force your legislation upon the people before they are prepared to receive it you will fail. Those who can remember the agitation which took place against Lord Ebury's Act, and the way in which the people of the Metropolis resented an interference with what they regarded as their privileges in the way of open houses on the Sunday, will share my opinion that you cannot legislate in this direction, unless the people are in favour of that legislation. I am satisfied that if this Bill were carried out in its entirety, we should have a repetition of the unfortunate scenes which took place at the time to which I referred. We must trust, I think, to the improved tone of society, and to the educational efforts, in order to bring the people into a condition in which they will accept restrictions of this kind, and I do not think you have arrived at that position now. This Bill proposes practically to say to a man who has been working hard during six days of the week, and unable practically to enjoy himself during those days that on the only occasion when he does have any leisure, he will find himself absolutely debarred from taking any refreshment. I think the House will find, if it sanctions this legislation, that the people of the country are not prepared to endorse its decision. With regard to Wales, Lord Aberdare, who was Home Secretary in the Liberal Government that brought in the Act of 1872, now tells you that, living in Wales, and knowing what has been the history of that Act in his district, he has sorrowfully had to change his opinion, and that if an extending Act is brought in he will be obliged to oppose it. If in Ireland, according to the hon. Member for South Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor), the Sunday Closing Act has not been a success—["Oh, oh!"]—if from the Welsh point of view, according to the evidence of a man who has done more in the direction of temperance legislation than anyone among those I see before me, the measure is a failure, shall we be justified in forcing a Bill of this kind upon the whole of the country? According to the evidence of numbers of Chief Constables in Scotland, the Forbes Mackenzie Act is not the success that its promoters anticipated, and it has increased, as they believe, secret drinking in that country. If we are going to abolish open drinking, with the result of producing a large amount of secret drinking, our action will, in my opinion, be deleterious rather than beneficial. I hope, therefore, that the House will pause before passing a Bill which is opposed by the large majority of working men in this country, who object to having their liberty interfered with in this matter, and prefer not to be subjected to grandmotherly legislation. I myself prefer to trust for improving the sobriety of the people to those better means which I think are now steadily advancing, and which I believe will, in the end, bring about the state of things we desire among the working classes, just as they have done already amongst other classes of the people.

*MR. LEA (Londonderry, South): I do not intend to discuss the general question, but I wish to say one word respecting the speech of the hon. Member for South Tipperary (Mr. J. O'Connor), who gave the House a complete misrepresentation of the views of the Select Committee of which he and I were members. The hon. Gentleman led the House to believe that the Report of the Solicitor General for Ireland (Mr. Madden), who was Chairman of the Committee, was completely overthrown by the majority of the members. As a matter of fact, the Report presented to the House was the Report of the Solicitor General for Ireland in all but one particular. The Solicitor General for Ireland was in favour of the stricter definition of the *bond fide* traveller; he was in favour of making permanent the Act for Sunday Closing, and he was in favour of greater restriction as to the hours of opening in the exempted towns—the time now allowed for opening being five hours, which he proposed to reduce to two or three. The Solicitor General was not, it was true, in favour of total closing in the exempted towns, but he approved the general working of the Act, and admitted the necessity of its being made permanent and extended. The hon. Member has quoted a number of statistics. Well, I find that whilst in 1877—the year before the Act was passed—the total number of arrests for drunkenness was 110,903, whereas in 1880, shortly after the Act was passed, they were reduced to 88,048, and the result was arrived at chiefly by a diminution in the number of Sunday arrests. I think it was the unanimous opinion of the great majority of the Committee that bogus clubs and shebeening had been inconsiderable since the Sunday Closing Act had been in operation. That is the Report of the majority of the Committee, and it is one which, when the Bill respecting Sunday Closing in Ireland is discussed, will, I am sure, carry the overwhelming opinion of the House in favour of it.

*MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I shall vote against the Second Reading of the Bill—not that I do not consider any change in the law desirable, but because I regard this as an unworkable measure. When the Bill was last before the House the hon. Member for South Shields (Mr. Stevenson) expressed his willingness to exclude the Metropolis, and I think other large towns, from the scope of the Bill in Committee. But if exemptions are to be made of this sweeping character the measure will be completely altered. It is not a straightforward mode of legislating to ask the House to accept the general principle underlying this Bill, upon the promise that that very principle will be altered in Committee. I feel quite certain that if, unfortunately, this Bill were to become law, it would be found quite impracticable to close all the public-houses during the whole of Sundays in large towns like London and Manchester and Leeds. Legislation on this question ought to go a little, but only a little, in advance of public opinion; but whatever it is, it should be based on some intelligible and practicable principle. I am ready to support the Bill of the hon. Baronet one of the Members for Durham (Sir J. Pease), and if the Bill now before the House is read a second time, I shall propose Amendments in that sense in Committee, being prevented by the forms of the House from moving the Amendment of which I have given notice at this stage. The noble Lord the Member for the Barnsley Division (Lord Compton) talked of being willing to close all clubs, both for rich and poor, during the whole of Sunday; but he would find it could not be done. I trust the House will endeavour to settle this question in a practical spirit.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Will you allow me, Sir, to make a personal explanation? I have been accused of misrepresenting the views of the Solicitor General for Ireland, who unfortunately is now absent. If the hon. Member who has made this accusation looks at the draft Report prepared by the Solicitor General for Ireland he will find that that Report states that, having regard to the practical unanimity of the witnesses summoned with regard to the working of the Act in the exempted towns, the Committee—

> "Could not recommend the extension of the Act to the exempted towns, nor any curtailment of the hours of opening therein."

Why did not the hon. Member read the entire Report instead of part of it?

*SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am extremely glad that we have had the very interesting and, I think, conclusive speech of the hon. Member for Londonderry (Mr. Lea) interposed between that of the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson) and my own, though I desired to rise after the right hon. Gentleman. His presence here to-day reminds us of those old days—the good old days—when he took such an active part in temperance legislation, and we do not forget the good work he has done. The changes he made in our laws were made within certain limits which he is unwilling, but which we are ready, to overstep, but valuable and practical changes they were. The right hon. Gentleman says we ought not to legislate upon subjects of this kind until the people are prepared for it and are in favour of it. Well, the people are, I think, prepared for this legislation and in favour of it—or, at any rate, are very rapidly approaching to that condition of mind. I do not underrate what may be done by sobriety and education to change the habits of the people; but we trust to sobriety and education to change the minds of the people who are opposed to temperance legislation. What has been effected in regard to gaming-houses is very instructive. A hundred years ago it would have been impossible to put down gaming-houses, but as the habits of gaming diminished public opinion supported the law against gaming-houses. It is said, however, that Sunday Closing has broken down and proved a failure in those parts of the Kingdom where it has been tried. I deny this. Taking the case of Ireland, the statistics show that, whereas between 1874 and 1878 the arrests for drunkenness on Sunday in those parts of Ireland to which the Sunday Closing Act subsequently applied never fell below 3,600 and sometimes exceeded 4,000, in the year that the Act passed they fell below 2,000, thereby showing that the effect of the Act was to reduce Sunday drunkenness by one-half, and cause only one family instead of two to be made miserable. Nor have the figures of Sunday drunkenness in the parts of Ireland to which the Act applies ever got back to their former proportions. More recent statistics tell the same tale. In the whole of Ireland where the Act is in force there were for the past year 2,800 arrests for drunkenness on Sunday. The population of that part of Ireland is about 4,200,000. In the exempted towns there is a population of about 700,000, and the arrests for drunkenness on Sundays in these towns were 2,000. According to the population there ought to have been only two arrests in the exempted towns for every 12 in the rest of Ireland. But instead of two there were eight arrests, showing that in the exempted towns arrests for drunkenness on Sundays were proportionately four times as numerous as in the parts of Ireland which are under the Act. Now, let me take Scotland. The Chief Constable of Scotland in 1856, two years after the Forbes-Mackenzie Act was passed, reported as follows:—

> "The same improvement in respect to decorum in our streets on the Sabbath Day mentioned in the first Report still continues, and on Saturday nights by 12 o'clock peace and good order is obtained, instead of as formerly a state of turmoil and disorder continuing the whole Sabbath morning. In no place is the difference more observable than in the police offices, particularly in the central office, where Sunday used to be a busy day, but is now perfectly quiet; and it is not unusual for a whole Sabbath to pass without a single case of any kind being put in."

He shows that, whereas the Sunday arrests in the three years before the Act was passed were 26, they averaged only nine in the three years afterwards. The Chief Constable of Edinburgh shows that by the passing of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act Sunday arrests fell from 12 to 8. But it is still more interesting to look not at the Sunday arrests, but at the arrests between 8 on the Sunday morning and 8 on the Monday, thus excluding what is really the Saturday night drunkenness. In all Edinburgh such arrests fell to two. The hon. Member for Oxford University (Mr. J. G. Talbot) spoke of the impossibility of totally closing public-houses on Sundays in large and populous towns. But in Glasgow, which may be regarded as the second largest city in the Kingdom, and a vast seaport, which contains a large nomad and precarious population, no such difficulty as the hon. Member apprehends is experienced. Let me read a very short extract from a letter from a Scotch working man of my acquaintance, whose politics are not the same as my own. He says—

> "I can well remember that there was a great amount of irritation on the closing of the licensed houses, and the constant and persistent efforts to avoid the law, but now, living amongst the working class, from my own knowledge I am glad to say that, year by year, the law is becoming more and more respected, and its benefits more fully recognized. Sunday drinking is now almost unknown, and I need scarcely add the reduction of drinking on Sunday has greatly improved the attendance at work and the fitness for work on the Monday. The advantages are now in every way so evident that it would take a bold man to stand up in any audience—I do not even except an audience of drink-sellers—and plead that all houses should again be open on Sunday."

There you have the answer to those hon. Gentlemen who are so anxious that the barmaids and the barmen should not be deprived of their seven days' wages in the week, for in Scotland the drink-sellers are in favour of the Forbes-Mackenzie Act. Reference has been made to the Welsh statistics, and these are certainly so curious that I shall be glad to see an inquiry made into them. The strange fact is to be noted that, whereas in England the arrests on Sunday are about one-tenth of those on other days, in Wales they are something more, but that if the county of Glamorganshire is excluded from the statistics they assume a totally different aspect—the Sunday arrests in Wales (excluding Glamorganshire) being only one in 13. It is admitted there is a strong Nonconformist feeling for this Bill. Well, there is a county where, out of a population of 125,000, about 100,000 are Nonconformists, while there is only one Nonconformist magistrate out of the 130 magistrates of the county; and I am inclined to think that possibly some part of the difficulty experienced in working this Act in Glamorganshire is that the bench of magistrates are not in sympathy with the popular mind. A great deal has been said about there being one law for the rich and another for the poor. We, on this side of the House, are quite willing that there should be the same law for all; but as a matter of fact it is not one of the privileges of the upper and middle classes to go tippling at bars on Sundays. We do not want to deprive the working men of any privilege which we enjoy. On the contrary, we want him to go to his own house and enjoy himself with his wife and children. It is said that his house is a bad one. But it would not be a bad one but for Sunday drinking. I know a part of the world where there is no Sunday drinking and where there is no bad house, and no badly furnished house either. Irrespective of its other evils, Sunday drinking is expensive for the working man, who cannot afford to spend a large part of his income on drink. If a man of our class was to spend a fifth or sixth of his income on drink, you would put him in a lunatic asylum, and the poor man cannot afford to spend on his own selfish enjoyment what ought to go to his wife and children. We voted for Sunday Closing in Wales and in Ireland because we were so impressed with the horrors that had to be met that we thought local measures were desirable if Imperial measures could not be obtained, and not because we were not in favour of Imperial measures, and we trust that the House will give a Second Reading to this measure.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to be allowed to make a correction in the statement I made earlier. In quoting from the Solicitor General, I referred to the wrong passage. The words used were—

> "In view of the difference of opinion, and having regard to the different conditions of life in cities and rural districts, we could not recommend an extension of the Act, or the inclusion of the five exempted cities."

*MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I regret that the rules of debate preclude me from moving the Amendment of which I have given notice, because the proposition embodied in the Bill is not, I think, one to be met with a direct negative, but on different lines in different localities. Sunday Closing is by no means a new subject, and before we act in a drastic manner such as this, it is well to recognize the fact that for generations it has been the habit to allow public-houses to be open on Sunday. Temperance advocates are fond of this method, and think the only way of promoting temperance is to stop the consumption of alcoholic drinks altogether. Now, all my life I have lived and worked among the poorer classes, and I have no hesitation in saying that one of the greatest evils in the land is the habit of drinking in public houses on Saturday and Sunday, and you cannot hope to effect any great change in the dwellings and habits of the people until by some means or other you get rid of this habit of sitting or standing soaking and toping at the bar of a public-house on Saturday and Sunday. But the practical question is, are we to do this by drastic legislation, or by the less heroic method which is now going on of inducing the people to promote their own improvement in the way we would wish. I am convinced that if by any means this Bill were passed into law requiring every public-house in London to be shut on Sunday, the opposition would be such that I am sure that it would be impossible to carry it out. It would be considered an act of tyrannical class legislation, and would tend, in my opinion, largely to retard the temperance movement which has been steadily going on for years, promoted by individual effort. What would be the effect of closing the public-houses? It is clear that total abstinence would not feel it. It is clear that among the middle classes, who keep their own cellars, nothing would be effected, only those would be affected who use public-houses, those who use them fairly, and those who use them unreasonably and to excess. It is the class who use the public-houses reasonably whom you ought to consult; but you would act without giving them any means of appeal, without affording them the chance of giving expression to their opinions. I will venture to say that if the hon. Members who will go into the Lobby in support of this Bill a great number, probably nine-tenths, who thus vote for the total closing of public-houses, will have liquor from their own cellars on their tables next Sunday. If that is the case, is it reasonable to say suddenly, to all classes who have not the advantages we have, that we will cut them off from having any alcoholic liquor on Sunday? My own opinion is that the opposition excited would be such that the real cause of temperance would be much retarded. The question of Sunday closing should be left to settle itself in each locality. Moderate men in each district, I have no doubt, would be quite willing to waive their own opinions and give up the use of public-houses on Sunday if they were consulted and had the opportunity of saying whether they would or would not have those houses open. It is said if we allow County Councils the decision on the subject, it would lead to much agitation in each district, and, I confess, I do not see why there should be any objection to that. There is an old objection to the endeavour to make people temperate by Act of Parliament, but I see no objection to allowing the reasonable men in every district the opportunity of settling the question in their own way. It does seem to me that it is condemning the proposal altogether to exclude London, for if it is desirable to have such legislation at all, it is to London the application is most needed. In different districts of London the proportion of public-houses and population varies greatly. In Paddington there is one licensed house to every 192 families, while in the Strand there is one to every 23 families, in Islington one in 156, and in Brentford one in 188. The hon. Baronet opposite suggests that therefore the Strand must be very bad, but that is not the necessary inference, or that the inhabitants of the Strand include so many more drunkards, it simply means that the circumstances of the locality are very different; there is a large population engaged in trade there during the day; there is a large daily influx of persons to shops, theatres, the Law Courts, and other places, and therefore the district requires to be differently treated to Paddington or Islington, where there is not such a migration of population day by by day. Then it will be said if each locality settled the question for itself the drunken localities would have their own way, and so there would be no improvement, but I think the benefit of closing the public-houses in some districts would appear, and there can be no doubt that, with the practical result to point to, other districts would soon follow the good examples. For these reasons I strongly supported the Licensing Clauses in last year's Local Government Bill, giving localities the right to settle these matters for themselves. The machinery is provided in the Local Government Act, and popular representation gives full opportunity for the expression of public opinion. It would not give local option in the sense of the term which some mean by it, but I am sure it would lead to the most beneficial result. If it were considered desirable to reduce the number of licensed houses, the Licensing Clauses would have given the opportunity. True, we should have had to pay for this, but still I believe it would have been a wise and economical provision. Parliament, however, in its wisdom, did not see fit to carry out the proposal. I sincerely wish to see the hours of drinking reduced. Parliament has legislated on this point, but it does seem to me an outrageous thing that licensed houses should be allowed to be open every night in London until half-past 12, when they are not wanted for any legitimate purpose. I am sure that if hon. Members could see what goes on at places within three-quarters of a mile of where we are now assembled, they would be convinced of the advisability of reducing the hours of drinking in the Metropolis. I much regret that my Amendment is not allowable, for I am well assured that the regulation of hours for opening and the question of whole or partial Sunday closing are matters that might safely be entrusted to the settlement of each locality according to its circumstances and requirements.

*BARON F. DE ROTHSCHILD (Bucks, Aylesbury): I do not wish to intervene at any length in the debate. There is no doubt hon. Members on both sides of the House express themselves warmly in favour of temperance, and the general speeches against temperance legislation are much qualified. The difficulties in the way of closing public-houses on Sunday are no more than the difficulties that have attended many great measures; difficulties that have to be met whenever any reform of magnitude comes before the House. There is an old saying, "You cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs." Naturally in every legislative measure there will be inequalities in application and opposition excited, but I sincerely hope that if this Bill passes its Second Reading, Amendments in Committee will remedy some of the difficulties. The hon. Member for Islington (Mr. Bartley) says he would rather trust to private influence and private agitation than to legislation, but I beg him to consider how large a proportion of the population look to the action of the House of Commons for a guiding principle, and if the House accepts and approves temperence principles the movement is greatly strengthened throughout the country. We only propose to close licensed houses on Sunday, and when hon. Members say this will not tend to reduce the number of public-houses, I venture to express a different opinion. There are many public-houses in London and elsewhere that are drinking dens of the foulest description, and are kept open almost entirely by the crowds that flock to them on Sunday. Sunday closing will suppress many of these, for their main source of profit would disappear. But I will not delay the Bill, which now, I hope, will pass its Second Reading.

MR. J. C. STEVENSON rose and claimed to move that the question be now put.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Mr. H. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.) rose at the same moment.

MR. J. C. STEVENSON withdrew his Motion.

MR. MATTHEWS: The hour does not allow me to go into the matter in debate. I only wish to explain the position of the Government. The position we take up is exactly that which on the last occasion was stated by my right hon. Friend (Mr. Ritchie). We regard this as in no sense a Party measure, and we hope that hon. Members on both sides will vote according to their convictions. This, however, I may say—that we do not depart from the views we expressed in the Local Government Act of last year, that we do not believe this is a matter for Imperial legislation, but that it is eminently a subject to be left to the decision of the persons in the localities that would be affected. Differing as opinions do in different localities according to circumstances and conditions of life, no universal rule should be applied, and I would refer to experience in Wales and in Ireland as pointing in that direction. We believe that the settlement proposed in the Local Government Act last year is the proper mode of dealing with the subject. If restrictions or limitations on the freedom of using public-houses are to be imposed at all, we think they should be imposed by the local authority. I was only anxious that there should be no misunderstanding as to our position on this question.

The House divided:—Ayes 179; Noes 157.—(Div. List, No. 47.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for To-morrow.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

QUESTIONS.

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IRELAND—THE ARREST OF FATHER FARRELLY.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I have urgently to call the attention of Irish Ministers to circumstances connected with the action of the police and what occurred yesterday at Dybank in the town of Arklow, the attempted arrest of Father Lawrence Farrelly, curate of the parish, sentenced to a term of imprisonment under the Crimes Act, and when I add that the circumstances are similar in character to those that have attended the arrest of reverend gentlemen in Ireland the urgency will be more apparent. Father M'Fadden, it will be remembered, was arrested in the midst of his congregation on leaving church immediately after the celebration of Mass. Father Kennedy was arrested after the police had broken into the house of a friend where he was staying. Father Clarke was arrested in the dead of the night. I can narrate the circumstances in the case I am referring to by reading a letter I have received from Father Farrelly. He, writing yesterday, says—

> "The police early this morning broke into my house and wrecked my home. They tore down the wall and effected an entrance. I was not there at the time. There was no necessity for such violence, for I was walking about the own every day, and they could have arrested me without any difficulty. I wrote to Inspector Cruze on the 21st of last month saying I was to be had whenever I was wanted."

The Rev. J. Doherty, writing on the same subject, says that 20 police called at the house at 5 o'clock and forced an entrance through the kitchen. They burst open every door until they came to the bedroom. Father Farrelly was not there. The police, 200 strong, are now in the town, which is full of country folk, and much public feeling has been excited. Father Farrelly was about town all the week, and celebrated Mass in the parish church on Sunday. Now, the warrant for this arrest was issued five or six weeks ago, and Inspector Cruze could have effected the arrest on any day during that time. I wish to ask, if Father Farrelly made this communication to the Inspector, and if the reverend gentleman could have been encountered any day as he went about the town, why did the Arklow police withhold the warrant all this time and then proceed 20 strong to the reverend gentleman's residence before dawn, break down the outer wall, burst open every door, and do all this unnecessary damage. I emphatically condemn this course of action, and before the House I earnestly protest against it. It is the fourth instance in which clerical gentlemen have been treated in this manner, and is, therefore, not due to accident. I protest against this course of conduct as being in the highest degree calculated to excite public feeling to the point of exasperation, and to produce a disturbance of the public peace, and I may even say loss of life. I call on the Minister to say that ecclesiastics liable to arrest under the Crimes Act, and not attempting to evade arrest, shall not be subjected to this unseemly violence.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): Although the right hon. Gentleman was kind enough to give me intimation of his intention to mention this matter on the Motion for Adjournment, it has been quite impossible for me in the time to obtain information upon the facts, more especially in regard to the letter to the Inspector which has only now come to my knowledge. I would ask hon. Members not to form any opinion on the subject-matter of the interrogation until I can put the House in possession of the facts. The only information I have received is contained in a telegram to the effect that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Father Farrelly, he being sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment for inciting to conspiracy to boycott a man named O'Connor. I am told that a number of police went to Arklow to effect the arrest, but found the house barricaded. They then broke into the house, but the reverend gentleman was not there and has not been arrested. Of course, the facts shall be fully inquired into, but the short space of time since I had notice of the question has not enabled me to ascertain how the case stands.

MR. SEXTON: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman have any objection to instruct the police at Arklow to inquire whether Father Farrelly expressed his willingness to surrender, and why they adopted this alternative to effecting the arrest in the ordinary manner by day?

MR. MADDEN: In the absence of information, it would not be right for me to make any statement that might seem to imply a doubt that the officer acted in accordance with his duty, and with due exercise of discretion in the matter.

THE "FROG'S MARCH."

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I wish to repeat a question I raised earlier in the day in reference to the death of Samuel Mahoney. I need not refer to the particulars, for, no doubt, the Home Secretary is familiar with them. My object is simply to ask the question whether the right hon. Gentleman has determined to order that an examination of the body of this man shall be made by a medical man not connected with the police force?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, may I ask whether the deplorable consequences of this method of conveying prisoners—a method which was brought before his notice last year, and is known as the "Frog's March"—seeing that manslaughter has been the direct result, he will take steps to prohibit the practice?

*MR. MATTHEWS: Unhappily the prisoner died——

MR. CONYBEARE: Was killed!

*MR. MATTHEWS: His death was due to his own violent conduct—violent beyond any experience of the police in cases of this sort. It took several constables to take him into custody at all. During the day I have been in communication with the Coroner who held the inquest; and after consultation I have come to the conclusion, inasmuch as the jury attached a rider to their verdict to that effect, that further medical examination was desirable. I have directed that the senior house surgeon of the London Hospital shall make an examination of the body and communicate to me any information he derives from that examination. At the same time I do not admit any doubt of the testimony of Dr. Phillips, whose high character and reputation is acknowledged, and whose statement to the jury appears quite satisfactory to me. It is only because I received the opinion of the jury that I ordered this further examination. I am quite sure that Dr. Phillips is quite incapable of any partiality in favour of the police.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I make no imputation at all against Dr. Phillips.

MR. O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): The facts in relation to this affair, no matter what the opinions of doctors may be, no matter what signs of disease may be discovered, are unquestionably conclusive that the death of this man was due to the action of the police. On the very night when this thing occurred I myself had an opportunity of witnessing in another district of London similar violence on the part of a number of policemen, some of whom were visibly drunk. In a case of this kind, where a charge of manslaughter is brought against a number of police, independent medical testimony ought always to be called in, and the issue should not, even to a certain extent, be allowed to be prejudiced by the intervention of the official doctor, because doctors, like lawyers, are inclined to support each other. Independent medical testimony should always be adduced in such cases. Anyone who knows London will know that policemen are apt, in dealing with prisoners of the poorer classes, to use unnecessary violence. On more than one occasion I have witnessed this, and have been tempted to bring the conduct of the police before the public; but, like many other people, want of time and an indisposition to be mixed up with unpleasant affairs have prevented me from coming forward as a witness. But, as I have said, the other night I witnessed a scene of disgraceful violence on the part of the police, though it does not seem to have had the termination of death, as in this case. Inquiry in such cases should be absolutely free from any taint of suspicion. We want something more from the Government—that action shall be taken to follow up such cases, and that there shall be proper examination of the body of the dead man; also, we should have some guarantee that this system of carrying a prisoner should be abolished. You never see it used elsewhere than in London. Elsewhere, when a man is violent, four or five men are well able to deal with him without having recourse to this "Frog's March."

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): Arising out of the question, may I ask the Home Secretary whether, looking at the melancholy result in this instance and with reference to the answer he gave last Session that the general rule in the police was to use the ambulance where a prisoner was violent, he will make the regulations in this respect more stringent, and require the police to use the ambulance or some mechanical means of conveyance—strapping a man down or something of that kind—making the rule more stringent in application, and the exceptions to it more rare? The right hon. Gentleman said last year that when the police were obliged to convey a man in this way they had to make a special report, but obviously that rule is abused, judging from the incident now before the House.

***Mr. MATTHEWS**: I do not think this case comes within the procedure. The policemen were called to eject this man from a public-house where he was very violent and disorderly. He knocked a policeman down, and behaved in such a violent manner that the police were unable to arrest him until six others came to their assistance. The rule about strapping down does not fit the case at all. There was no intention on the part of the police to adopt what is called the Frog's March, but the prisoner's struggles were so violent from the moment he was told to leave the public-house that it was with the greatest difficulty the police could get him to the station at all. It was in the course of his violent resistance that he happened to be face downwards. I may mention that it is always open to a Coroner to call an independent medical witness if he thinks fit.

IRELAND—THE ARREST OF FATHER FARRELLY.

***Mr. W. J. CORBET** (Wicklow, E.): I wish to return to the incident of the police violence at Arklow. The statement of the hon. and learned Gentleman that Father Farrelly had barricaded his house is altogether inconsistent with the fact that he had intimated his willingness to place himself at the disposal of the Police Inspector. There is also the inconsistency that seeing that the warrant was held in suspense for several weeks the rev. gentleman would have had to keep up his barricade night and day the whole time. It is quite evident he knew nothing about the intention of the police in regard to his arrest on this particular occasion. I have myself walked through the town with the rev. gentleman more than once since the issue of the warrant, and we passed the police several times. May I ask whether, under the warrant, the police had any right whatever to break into the rev. gentleman's house?

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman tell us to whom he is about to apply for information? We already have the statement of Father Farrelly; is the hon. and learned Gentleman going to apply to the police who so misconducted themselves, or to any other source? If he is going to postpone consideration for this purpose, the whole thing is little better than a farce. I am well acquainted with Father Farrelly, and I am sure he had no intention in any way to evade the service of the warrant. It is the opinion of the people in the district—an opinion which I share—that the police deliberately adopted this form of arrest in order, if possible, to inflict a public insult on the rev. gentleman. In a similar manner Father Clarke was arrested; he could have been taken quietly at any time, but the police deliberately adopted a time and method that was sure to lead to a great deal of public excitement.

Mr. MADDEN: I can make no further statement until I receive further information.

It being Six of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 9] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [April 5.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 28th March, 1889.

THE LATE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS—THE LATE MR. JOHN BRIGHT.—OBSERVATIONS.

***The PREMIER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (The Marquess of Salisbury): My Lords, since we last met, death has been active and has withdrawn from the stage of public life two men very different in many respects, but with whom and whose acts and whose daily life we were familiar. Mr. Bright's reputation does not belong to this House, yet it would not be fitting that we should go to our business without one word to express our emotion and our grief for the great bereavement which the nation has suffered. My Lords, this would not be the time to review Mr. Bright's public action. It would be impossible to do it without entering into those controversial questions which are little suited to an occasion like this, and we are too near to the scene of dispute and to the passions of the disputants to be able to pass that impartial judgment which posterity and the issue of events will some day pass on the achievements of his political career. But we are not too far distant to be able to admire and regret the man, to appreciate his powers, and to venerate the motives by which he was actuated. I think, besides what judgment may be passed upon his public achievements, there are two special characteristics for which he will be admired and noted in history. In the first place, he was the greatest master of English oratory that this generation has produced, or I may perhaps say several generations back. I have met men who have heard Pitt and Fox, and in whose judgment their eloquence at its best was inferior to the finest efforts of John Bright. At a time when much speaking has depressed and almost exterminated eloquence, he maintained robust and intact that powerful and vigorous style of English which gave fitting expression to the burning and noble thoughts he desired to express. Another characteristic for which I think he will be famous is the singular rectitude of his motives, the singular straightness of his career. He was a keen disputant, a keen combatant; like many eager men, he had little tolerance of opposition. But his action was never guided for a single moment by any consideration of personal or party selfishness. He was inspired by nothing but the purest patriotism and benevolence from the first beginning of his public career to the hour of its close. Before I sit down I must say a word as to another public man, of whom death has robbed us most sadly, and most unexpectedly, within the last few days. The Duke of Buckingham was well known in this House and greatly valued. He had not long occupied that Chair; but he had been in it a sufficient time to conciliate the admiration of all for his strict impartiality, his earnest and assiduous attention to his duties, and his grasp and comprehension of even the smallest details that were brought under his notice. He filled an office of very great importance with uprightness and diligence and with most beneficial effect, and he will long be missed by all those who come to this House for the discharge of the important duties that were committed to his care.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Earl GRANVILLE: My Lords, your Lordships will allow me to follow in a few short sentences the graceful and touching allusions which the noble Marquess has made to the great losses which we have sustained since our last meeting. The noble Duke, as the noble Marquess stated, has passed away by a sudden and unexpected death. I was not, like the noble Marquess, a political friend, and I was not an intimate personal friend, of the noble Duke. But a good many years ago I had the honour of being associated with him upon a Commission of considerable difficulty and importance, and I can say with truth that I never met a man more industrious and more perfectly honourable. There is another matter about which I wish to say one word. When Lord Redesdale died the noble Marquess proposed the Duke of Buckingham as his successor I moved an Amendment proposing another Peer, one who had been a colleague of mine, but who no longer agrees in politics with me; and I stated the reasons why I thought his claims fitted him for the post. That circumstance makes me specially desirous of saying to your Lordships, what it is now impossible for me to say to the noble Duke himself, that since his acceptance of the office, from my own observation, and from what I have heard from others, nothing but the most favourable criticism has been passed, either by Members of this House or by the public, on the manner in which he discharged the duties which your Lordships imposed upon him. My Lords, the noble Marquess alluded to the loss which this nation has sustained in the death of Mr. John Bright, a death which has filled the land with gloom. The noble Marquess—I thought most properly and judiciously—avoided entering into any great detail with regard to his life and career. For myself, I feel it would be idle to dwell upon some of his chief characteristics—his loyalty to his Sovereign, his devotion to his country, and his enthusiasm for everything that he thought consistent with right and truth. The noble Marquess has paid a due compliment to his extraordinary powers of eloquence, to the manner in which, blending close reasoning with illustration, pathos with humour, he obtained a hold over those whom he addressed which has hardly ever been surpassed. I feel that it would be equally useless for me to allude to his great moral courage, to his dignified simplicity, and, as the noble Marquess says, to the straightness of the course which he ran. There is one point on which, perhaps, I may say a word, for I know more than some of your Lordships about it. I had known Mr. Bright between 40 and 50 years. That acquaintance, with other circumstances, prevented my ever feeling that prejudice which there is no doubt at one time was felt against Mr. Bright. I always felt for him great esteem and regard, and I might mention that even as far back as 1853 I asked Lord Aberdeen why he did not invite Mr. Bright at that time to join the Government. My personal and intimate acquaintance chiefly dates from the time when Mr. Bright took office under Mr. Gladstone. I speak in the presence of noble Lords who are Cabinet Ministers, and of noble Lords who have been Cabinet Ministers. I do not know whether they will agree with me as to one point; but I have found, as a rule, with very few exceptions indeed, that that peculiar sort of intimacy, that sort of *esprit de corps*, which naturally springs up among men assembled to carry on most important business under the pressure of very great responsibility, has always made me feel a greater liking and a greater esteem than I previously had for those with whom I was associated. Certainly, there never was a case in which this was more so than as regards Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright, quite independent of his powers of eloquence, was a most useful man in the Government to which he belonged. His knowledge and his sympathies were hardly common to the run of English politicians. He had admirable good sense; and, I may say also, it is perhaps remarkable, considering his vigour and the enthusiasm of his character, how great was the moderation of the advice which he gave to his colleagues. I never knew a Member of a Cabinet who acted more as a peacemaker among his colleagues. It takes many years to build up a reputation such as Mr. Bright's. It is a proud thing for a man to have done so. But I must say that it is equally creditable to the nation to which he belonged that they should so unanimously appreciate the reputation which he thus made.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL. (NO. 32.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed: and referred to the Examiners.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. considered and dispensed with for this day's sitting.

ARBITRATION (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 31.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD **BRAMWELL**: I ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill, which is intituled "An Act to Consolidate the Law relating to Arbitrations." I need not trouble your Lordships at any great length about it. It was prepared, at the suggestion of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, by a very competent draftsman. It cannot require any very lengthy argument to commend it to your Lordships—at any rate, upon the Second Reading—because, two or three years ago, the same Bill was read by this House a second time and passed through Committee. There is one word I would like to say. My noble Friend on the Woolsack has himself got an Arbitration Bill, but that is a Bill to consolidate and codify the statutory enactments with respect to arbitration. With that Bill I have not the smallest fault to find; indeed, I think it is well worthy of your Lordships' consideration. The Lord Chancellor has said that my Bill is a more ambitious one. Perhaps it is in this sense: that, whereas the Bill of my noble Friend is good so far as it goes, and is acceptable on the principle that "half a loaf is better than no bread," this Bill of mine is a whole loaf, and it seeks to codify and consolidate all the statutory and other law affecting arbitrations into one measure. At any rate, I ask your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading. If my noble Friend should desire that it should not proceed beyond that stage, I shall not press it; but perhaps my noble Friend may consider that it would be desirable that this Bill should be considered in Committee in conjunction with his own Bill.

THE **LORD CHANCELLOR**: As I explained to your Lordships in moving the Second Reading of the measure which I had the honour of introducing to your Lordships' House the other day, my Bill is intended to codify the whole law of arbitration, and the only difficulty I have in at once adopting the noble Lord's suggestion that the Bill should be considered in Committee with mine, in order that we should get what he describes as the whole loaf, is that undoubtedly there are matters in this Bill which would give rise to controversy. My noble Friend has—with great ability I quite admit—sought to reconcile the statute law and the law as it rests on judicial decisions. In so doing it was impossible that he should have escaped matters which would give rise to controversy, and there are one or two respects in which I am bound to say I should not myself be disposed to agree with the Bill as drawn. In fact, I doubt very much whether it would be possible at the present time to pass a large measure completely consolidating the law as to arbitrations. I believe the aim should be to embody in a codifying Act in complete form the various enactments that are upon the Statute Book, and then consider what would be desirable in the way of amendment. I need hardly say that I have no objection whatever to the Second Reading and Commitment of this Bill. I am only desirous that my noble Friend should not tack his measure on to mine, with a view to obtaining what may be a common favourable discussion.

Bill read 2ª.

THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY AT ROME.

LORD **LAMINGTON**, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether any correspondence had passed between the Foreign Office and the Italian Government respecting the proposed desecration of the Protestant Cemetery at Rome; and, if so, whether it would be laid on the Table, said: My Lords, there is no English Cemetery to which greater interest attaches than the Protestant Burial Ground at Rome. Many of your Lordships, on visits to the city, must have seen the place, which is in a beautiful, retired spot, and is associated with many imperishable names—the name of Keats, of Shelley, of Gibson, and of Wyatt, among many others. It is the first place to which Protestant visitors to Rome go. It is proposed by the Municipal Government of Rome to carry a road through the lower part of that burial ground, for the purpose of widening a thoroughfare which is very little frequented, and the so-called improvement necessitates the removal of, I think, 73 graves. It is true that the road which passes the lower inclosure of the cemetery to the Via Ostiensis is somewhat narrow, and a few yards might be gained by the removal of the wall; and for this trifling object, to widen a road on which there is scarcely any traffic, it is proposed to violate the sanctity of 73 graves, and that notwithstanding that a large sum has been subscribed by British and other families for the protection and maintenance of the cemetery. In addition to the illustrious Englishmen I have named, there are the names of Humboldt, of Bunsen, of Goethe and many other great Germans associated with this burial ground. What I wish to know is whether any correspondence has passed between Her Majesty's Government and the Italian Government with the object of preventing this act of sacrilege and spoliation. I say spoliation, because, as I say, a fund was started some time ago and received large support from Protestant Christians for the purpose of protecting this graveyard; and I call it sacrilege because many of the graves there are revered by Protestant Christians of all nationalities. Much that is beautiful and attractive in Old Rome has disappeared under the new state of things; but I hope that Her Majesty's Government will interfere to prevent a change which would really be an outrage, and which would wound the feelings of many families.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, there has been no correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Italian Government on this question. It would not be precisely a subject for international interference. I imagine that the suppression of graveyards is occasionally necessary in some cases, and I do not think that our consciences are entirely free with respect to the City of London in the matter. But we have had a communication unofficially with the Municipality of Rome on the subject; and although I have not got the details here, and cannot repeat them quite accurately, still I do not think the Municipality deserve the reproaches which my noble Friend—at all events by implication—aims at them. They have shown great consideration in the matter, and it is the first time I have heard them charged with spoliation. I believe all private rights have been respected, and with regard to foreign Governments, I understand the German Government, at all events, to be at one with them. We offered some observations to induce them to preserve the tomb of Keats and of one or two other illustrious men which it was proposed to remove, and the result of the correspondence was that they behaved in a very kindly and considerate manner, and undertook that these graves should not be disturbed. If my noble Friend wishes to have the correspondence published it will be done; but I doubt if it is worth the expense. If my noble Friend will step over to the Foreign Office he may see the correspondence.

LORD LAMINGTON: After what the noble Marquess has said, I will not press for the correspondence. I may say that I used the word spoliation because I knew that a fund had been created at Rome for the protection of this burial ground, and if that were taken away I say it would be an act of spoliation.

*THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I think another burial ground was provided of quite equal value.

THE COMMUTATION OF NAVAL AND MILITARY PENSIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to ask the Under Secretary of State for War whether any decision had been formed with reference to the commutation of naval and military officers' pensions, said: I need not detain your Lordships at great length in putting this question, because the subject was before your Lordships' House last Session.

LORD HARRIS: I am afraid that I shall not be able to give any answer which will be satisfactory to the noble Viscount. In consequence of the representations of my noble Friend, His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief and the Secret ary of State for War have taken the matter seriously into their consideration, and instructions to officers who desire to commute their reserve pay have been issued in a special Army Order, which will appear on the 1st of April. The Secretary of State for War is not the final authority which decides the question of commutation. He only recommends to the Commutation Board and the Treasury, and it is for them to act on the recommendation if they think proper. The following form of instructions to officers desiring to commute their half-pay, retired pay, or other payments of a like nature under the Pensions Commutation Acts, will be issued on Revised Army Form B. The conditions under which the Secretary of State for War would recommend cases for the consideration of the Pensions Commutation Board under the foregoing instructions are:—

> "(1) The Secretary of State for War will not recommend the commutation of the non-effective pay of an officer who is liable to be called to serve in time of war or emergency; (2) the Secretary of State of War will not in any case recommend the commutation of non-effective pay to the extent of more than one-half of it; and he will not recommend the commutation unless a sum of at least £80 a year be left uncommuted."

I believe that the Admiralty have been communicated with, and they are ready to act on the same lines.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (NO. 2) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; and read 1ª: Then, Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. having been dispensed with, moved that the Bill be now read 2ª; agreed to: Bill read 2ª accordingly: Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 28*th March*, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

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RAILWAY RATES.

MR. MACLURE (Lancashire, S.E., Stretford) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether it was a fact that the Board are requiring every railway company who deposit proposals for a revised classification of traffic and revised schedule of maximum rates, under "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," to pay a fixed sum of £50 irrespective of the importance of its undertaking and its financial position; under what authority and by whom the fee of £50, irrespective of the ability of the company to pay it, has been fixed, and what sum has been received by the Board of Trade, and for what purpose the money is required, and whether any scheme has been devised as to its expenditure; and whether he would consider the propriety and justice of exempting those railway companies which are earning nothing for their shareholders, and charging the expenses upon those which are remunerative undertakings in some general proportion to their magnitude and earnings?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The Board of Trade have fixed £50 as the fee to be paid by every railway company depositing a revised classification of merchandize and schedule of maximum rates. The fee is fixed by rules made by the Board of Trade under the provisions of Section 35 of the Railway and Canal Act, 1888, and the money will be applied as an appropriation in aid of the expenses arising upon the settlement of the classifications and schedules. I have already dispensed with part of the fee in certain cases, and I will carefully consider any application coming from a company who are *bonâ fide* unable to pay without detriment to their creditors. But it must be remembered that the labour and expense of settling a schedule does not vary with the size of the company, and that £50 is not an unreasonable sum to ask from any solvent company for the work performed.

IRELAND—LORD MASSEREENE'S ESTATE.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state how many evictions took place on Lord Massereene's property in county Louth under the Plan of Campaign; in how many holdings where evictions did not place was the interest of the tenant determined by the service of notices under Section 7 of the Land Act of 1887; in how many of such cases had the tenant redeemed under the provisions of the Land Acts; in how many of such cases the period for redemption had not expired; and, how many of the vacant farms had been let to new tenants, and how many vacant farms were now to let on the estate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I am informed that on Lord Massereene's property in the county Louth, on which the Plan of Campaign has been adopted, 29 tenants and three sub-tenants were dispossessed from their holdings. In 32 holdings, where eviction did not take place, the interest of the tenant was determined by the service of a notice under Section 7. In two of these cases the tenant has redeemed, and in 16 of them the period for redemption has not yet expired; 14 of the vacant farms have been let to new tenants. There are now 10 vacant farms to let on the estate.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked how many of the new lettings were nominal lettings to emergency men?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe they are all substantial tenants.

FENIT PIER.

Mr. MAHONY (Meath, N.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is a fact that the Board of Works sent a certificate, dated 19th June, 1885, to the Secretary of the County Kerry Grand Jury, claiming a sum of £3,192 11s. 4d. as due to them for money advanced for the construction of a pier at Fenit; whether at that time no portion of the amount claimed was due, having been previously discharged by the Tralee and Fenit Harbour Commissioners; whether a case was reserved by Chief Baron Palles at the Summer Assizes, 1885, for the consideration of the Judges; whether the Judges subsequently decided that the cesspayers were not liable for the amount; and whether, notwithstanding that decision, the said sum of £3,192 11s. 4d. has been paid by the Harbour Commissioners out of the capital advanced, and is regularly charged in each half-yearly certificate sent by the Board of Works when demanding payment?

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds): The sum of £3,192 11s. 4d. was paid to the Board of Works prior to June, 1885, by the Harbour Commissioners under the provisions of the mortgage deed in respect of five half-yearly instalments, with the intention, as was afterwards stated to the Board, of claiming the amount by one presentment from the guaranteeing Baronies. The Board of Works did send, at the request of the Harbour Commissioners, a certificate, dated the 19th June, 1885, for that sum, for the purpose of recouping the Harbour Commissioners. The amounts certified for were payable, as far as the Board then believed, by the Baronies under the guarantee. A case was reserved by Chief Baron Palles, and the Judges subsequently decided that, inasmuch as the claims had not been made half-year by half-year, as required by the Act, the Baronies were not liable. The certificate which the Board sends each half-year is in respect of the full advances made from time to time, which now amount to £95,000, being the full amount of the loan.

Mr. MAHONY further asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention had been called to the proceedings before the last Kerry Grand Jury, when an application made by the cesspayers of the barony of Iraghticonnor, to have the necessary steps taken to investigate the expenditure of £95,000 obtained for the purpose of erecting a pier at Fenit, was refused by a majority of 10 to 8; whether, by the direction of the previous Grand Jury, the opinion of eminent counsel had been obtained in the matter; whether that opinion stated that several thousand pounds had been misapplied by the Harbour Board; whether that opinion was laid before the present Grand Jury before they came to their decision; whether some of the members of the Grand Jury who voted against the proposed investigation were also members of the Harbour Board; and, if so, how many; whether, under the circumstances, he will direct the Board of Works, from whom the loan was obtained, to hold a public inquiry into the manner in which the £95,000 has been expended, and to ascertain whether the pier has been completed according to the original contract and specification; whether sheds and cranes as provided for by the specification have been erected: and, whether the condition laid down by instructions from the Lord Lieutenant at the time when the ratepayers were asked to sanction the loan—namely, that no portion of the loan should be allocated to the canal or any other purpose than the erection of the pier, has been strictly adhered to?

*MR. JACKSON: My attention has not been called to this subject, otherwise than by the hon. Member's question, and I learn that the Commissioners of Public Works have no information on the subject beyond what is open to the general public.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Wexford Grand Jury had awarded £500 compensation to Head Constable O'Brien, of Taghmon, for injuries done to his eyes at eviction work; whether it was true that the injuries in question were of so slight a character, that after 10 days' treatment in hospital Constable O'Brien was reported fit for duty, and whether he was now performing his usual work; whether he was aware that the local doctor in Taghmon considered O'Brien's injuries so slight that he did not advise any hospital or special treatment for two months after the injuries were received; whether it was true, as stated by the counsel for O'Brien, that the compensation of £500 was not so much for O'Brien's injuries as to "deter cases of this description;" whether representations had reached him that under all the circumstances the granting by the Grand Jury of such a large sum of money for so slight an injury has caused very widespread indignation in Wexford County; whether it was a fact that at the eviction where Head Constable O'Brien was injured, Mr. Considine, the resident magistrate in charge of the police, declared that the people who were about to be evicted had offered "fair terms" to the landlord; whether he was aware that the people of the district had resolved not to pay the £500 to O'Brien, as a protest against the employment of armed police in evicting people who, according to Mr. Considine, R.M., had offered "fair terms;" whether there was any medical evidence that the policeman in question has been permanently injured; and, whether the Government would take steps to prevent such cases of large compensation for slight injuries?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Grand Jury have granted compensation to the Head Constable for the injury to his eyes. I am informed that the local doctor did not at first consider the case serious; but it was afterwards found necessary to send the Head Constable to the Ophthalmic Hospital in Dublin, where he was detained for 10 or 12 days, and it was some weeks later before he could resume his full duty. I understand that, in the opinion of the local doctor, the Head Constable's sight will never be as strong as it was before the injury. The Government have no power to interfere in the manner suggested. With regard to the observation of Mr. Considine, it is to be borne in mind that it referred only to the offer made on behalf of the tenants when the sheriff and evicting party were actually on the ground.

MR. W. REDMOND: Would not these injuries have been avoided if O'Brien had followed the advice of his superior officer, Mr. Considine, R.M.?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not in a position to say. Mr. Considine was not in charge of the police.

MR. W. REDMOND: On what ground does the right hon. Gentleman say that Mr. Considine was not in charge of the police?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I may be wrong, but I presume that he was not, because it is not the usual practice.

MR. W. REDMOND: In consequence of the reply of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg to give notice that I will take the earliest opportunity of calling attention to the exorbitant nature of this compensation which has been awarded for injuries, which would not have been sustained if the advice of the Resident Magistrate had been taken.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he had any information with respect to the case of a bullock suffering from pleuro-pneumonia, reported to have been exported from the county Tyrone to Cumberland; whether, if the report was true, he would have strict inquiry made as to whence the disease, which has been so long extinct in Ulster, has been imported;

and whether pleuro-pneumonia now exists in county Tyrone, or in any other Northern county?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Reports have been received of an outbreak on the 26th of February of pleuro-pneumonia in Cumberland, and among cattle alleged to have been purchased at markets in the counties of Tyrone and Londonderry about a month previously. An inspector of the Irish Veterinary Department is at present engaged in making careful inquiry as to the origin of the outbreak. Pleuro-pneumonia does not, so far as the Veterinary Department is aware, exist in the county Tyrone, or any other northern county; and, according to the official Returns, the whole of the Province of Ulster has been entirely free from the disease since 1885.

LABOUR IN THE DOCKYARDS.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he would consider the case of the Works' Department in the Dockyards, in order to assimilate their hours to those of the Dockyard men, or give them more pay for the additional time they work?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The point referred to in the question was carefully considered by the Admiralty last year, and it was decided to be inexpedient that the hours of work of men employed under the Works' Department, and those engaged in dockyard work should necessarily be the same. This decision was arrived at after a full consideration of the case in all its bearings. A large proportion of these men are employed at places other than dockyards, and it is necessary, if a permanent staff for public works is to be maintained, that the men on it should be much on the same footing as contractors' men doing the same work.

THE RANGER'S LODGE, GREENWICH PARK.

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether there had, during the past twelve months, been any, and what, change of the tenancy of the Ranger's Lodge, Greenwich Park; who was now the tenant, and what were the terms of the tenancy: whether the question of throwing open to the public the fifteen acres, or thereabouts, hitherto annexed to the Lodge, had been considered, as promised last Session; and, what decision had been arrived at?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): In last autumn General Lord Wolseley became tenant of the Ranger's Lodge, Greenwich Park, which had before been in the occupation of Lady Mayo. Lord Wolseley holds by the pleasure of Her Majesty. When I came to inquire into the matter, raised last year by the question of the hon. Member, I found that the fifteen acres referred to had always been attached to the Ranger's Lodge; that it had never formed a part of the Park open to the public; and that nothing is paid by the public for the maintenance of any portion of these grounds. Under these circumstances no change has been made.

THE ENFIELD ELECTION.

MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) asked the Secretary of State for War, whether, at the last election at Enfield, the workmen employed at the Small Arms Factory had a half-holiday for the purpose of voting; whether they were compensated for the loss of time; and, if so, by whom were they paid, and from what fund?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The last Parliamentary Election took place on a Tuesday, and the workmen at the Small Arms Factory had a half-holiday, for which no stoppage of wages took place. At the election of the County Council special facilities were afforded to the workmen for recording their votes. They had leave, with pay, for two hours.

POST OFFICE CLERKS.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Postmaster General whether it was the case that the duties and responsibilities of assistant superintendents of the second class in London, and those of the officers in the superintending class known as "clerks" in Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool, are identical, whereas the officers in London are paid at the rate of £300 per annum, and the salary of the officers in the three provincial offices named is only £190 per annum; whether these provincial officers are remunerated on the same scale (£140 to £190) as the telegraphists at the London end of a wire; whether telegraphists at Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool, who perform exactly the same duties as their London brethren, are paid at the maximum of 50s. a week, a difference of £60 a year; and, whether these differences of pay having now been brought under his notice, he is prepared to take steps to remove them?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member I have to state that the duties and responsibilities of the class designated "Clerks" in the post offices of Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool are not identical with those of the class designated as "Assistant Superintendents of the Second Class" in London. The remuneration of the different classes referred to by the hon. Member is correctly stated in his question. The organization of the service, including the pay in London and in the Provinces, was thoroughly examined and settled in 1881, the papers being then laid before Parliament; and there do not appear to be any sufficient grounds for disturbing that arrangement.

THE GLOUCESTER TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

MR. P. J. O'BRIEN (Tipperary, N.) asked the Postmaster General if it was true that when a probationer lineman of the Engineer's Department, Post Office Telegraphs, at Gloucester, recently reported his Inspector for uttering forged wage-receipts, the inquiry was held by a friend of the accused, and resulted only in his transfer to Haverfordwest, while the complainant was punished by the loss of his annual increment and severely cautioned; and whether he would explain the circumstances of the case to the House?

*MR. RAIKES: No, Sir; it is not true. The inspector in question, who had been guilty of irregularities in his accounts, but not, so far as appeared, with a view to his own profit, was not only transferred to Haverfordwest—he was also reduced to a lower position with lower pay. Neither was the complainant punished by the loss of his increment, for he had none to lose; and I have been unable to ascertain that he received any caution. Whether the officer who investigated the case was a friend of the accused or not I do not know, but it is the fact that he was his superior officer, and as such the proper person to make the investigation, and I have no reason to suppose that it was not conducted with ability and impartiality.

THE METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD—DR. P. H. M'KELLAR.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether a retiring allowance of £1,000 has been granted by the Metropolitan Asylums Board to Dr. P. H. M'Kellar, Medical Superintendent of the South Western Hospital, and, if so, under what authority; and whether he has made, or will make, a representation to the Board on the subject?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's in the East): An application has been made to the Local Government Board by the managers of the Metropolitan Asylums Board in the sense referred to in the question; and prior to the notice of the hon. Member appearing on the paper, I had given directions that the managers should be informed that the Local Government Board were unable to assent to the proposed payment, and the managers have been informed accordingly.

IRELAND—EVICTIONS BY THE EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been directed to the circumstances attending the evictions carried out on the Tounaculty estate of the Education Commissioners near the Town of Donegal, on Thursday and Friday last, when the rent due amounted in all to about £80, to be collected from 17 or 18 tenants, scattered over about a thousand acres of poor land; whether to collect this sum a force of some 200 men has been employed, armed with ladders, ropes, grappling irons, shields, poles, and hooks, and a battering ram, all specially procured, for the purpose of effecting these evictions; is it a fact that a cordon of police and military was drawn round each house, within which neither the representatives of the Press, nor the Very Reverend Hugh M'Fadden, P.P., nor his curate, the Reverend Edward

Cassidy, were admitted; was any resistance offered to the Sheriff at any of the houses so visited; and what will be the cost to the county of this expedition and its appliances?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the facts are substantially as stated in the first three paragraphs of the question, except that the force was present not to collect rent, but to maintain the law by protecting those who were bound to enforce it. No resistance was offered, and no cost to the county will be incurred. The arrangements of the authorities appear to have been excellent. Of the 17 tenants 13 avoided eviction at the last moment by paying all that was demanded, which they were well able to do, and one of the tenants who allowed himself to be evicted for a debt of £9 had £50 worth of stock on the premises. The Plan of Campaign was in force, but has now been broken down, and, so far as I am acquainted with the facts, no sympathy whatever need be felt for the tenants.

Mr. MAC NEILL: Through a misprint the question uses the word "county" instead of country. I want to know what the cost is to the country.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot answer that question.

IRELAND—PROSECUTION OF CONSTABLE M'ANEANY.

Mr. MAC NEILL asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether his attention had been directed to the circumstances attending the trial of Constable M'Aneany, who was indicted at the Derry Assizes for presenting a revolver at one Patrick O'Donnell at Ardmore, in the County of Donegal; did the Special Jury, under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, which acquitted the prisoner, consist entirely of Protestants; why was a constable for an offence alleged to be committed in Donegal tried in Derry, while peasants for offences committed in the same county were tried in Fermanagh; did the same counsel prosecute in the County of Fermanagh peasants for resisting evictions, and in Derry a policeman for an alleged assault arising out of these evictions; were the juries which tried the peasants in Fermanagh composed exclusively of Protestants; and, can he state why the Crown exercised the right of challenge in Fermanagh and not in Derry?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): My attention has been called to this matter by the question of the hon. Gentleman. I have no means of ascertaining the religion of the jurors who tried any of the cases referred to, and can give no information as to the grounds on which the right of challenge was exercised by those who appeared on behalf of the Crown. As regards the change of venue in one case to Fermanagh and in another to Derry, I am informed that Derry was selected, not only because it was a suitable venue, but because when the order changing the venue was obtained, there would not have been sufficient time to have the case tried at Enniskillen, where the Assizes are held for the county of Fermanagh before they are held at Londonderry, a subsequent town on the same circuit. Mr. M'Laughlin, Q.C., the leader of the circuit, prosecuted in both cases. Mr. Ross was associated with him in Fermanagh, and Mr. Richardson, Q.C., and Mr. Harte in Derry.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Fermanagh, N.) asked if the attention of the Government had been called to the connection between this matter and the fact that, when it became known that the venue was to be changed, the Orangemen of the district called a meeting, in which some Magistrates took part, and at which they pointedly referred to these trials taking place in Fermanagh, and reminded the people in most significant terms that it was their business practically to convict the Donegal people?

Mr. MADDEN: No, Sir; I have not the slightest reason to suppose any such thing.

Mr. MAC NEILL repeated the last sentence in his question, and asked if all these matters did not arise out of the same transaction?

Mr. MADDEN said no doubt these transactions were connected with the same case. He had answered the last question. He could give no information as to the ground of the challenges, except that they were in accordance with the printed rule on the subject.

Mr. W. REDMOND asked if the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary would make inquiries?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must ask for notice of the question.

THREATENING LETTERS.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been called to the case of an emergency man, named Daniel Murphy, who was in charge of an evicted farm on the Lansdowne estate, in Kerry, and who was sentenced to two concurrent terms of six months' hard labour, on 18th March, at Kenmare, for writing letters to John Foley and James Shea, threatening them with "a sudden and unholy death" if they took the "boycotted farm" which he was then caretaking for Lord Lansdowne; did Sergeant Walters, who arrested him, send a message (at prisoner's request, to the Lansdowne office, to have him defended by a solicitor; was he defended by Mr. Mahony, the solicitor to the estate office; did he acknowledge to having written the second letter when convicted of the first; and, did the police authorities of the district compare the writing in these letters with other threatening letters in their possession, and are those letters included in the Return of "threatening letters" issued to Parliament?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the facts are substantially as stated in the first four paragraphs of the question. The police did not compare the letters with other threatening letters in their possession. The letters will be included in the Returns of outrages to be presented to Parliament.

ALLEGED MALICIOUS BURNING.

MR. LANE asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it was a fact that the claim of the Land Corporation for the alleged malicious burning of a house on the Ponsonby estate was fixed at £100 by the Presentment Sessions of Midleton; could he state how many of the magistrates were local Justices; did the Grand Jury of the county of Cork, upon the same evidence, increase this award to £175 for the Land Corporation; how many members of the Grand Jury are members of the Land Corporation; did the Grand Jury award a policeman, who was living in the house at the time it was burned, a sum of £22 10s. without any proof that he had lost this sum in the fire; and could he inform the House why the Grand Jury increased the award, and what proof there was that the policeman had this money in the house?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The secretary of the Grand Jury informs me that the reply to the inquiry in the first paragraph is in the affirmative, but that the claim of the Land Commission was £225. Seven of the magistrates were local Justices. The Grand Jury did increase the award to £175. The secretary has no precise information as to the subject of the fourth paragraph, but so far as he is aware, there are only some two or three such members, and they did not vote on the matter. The Grand Jury did not make the award to the policeman without any proof as to his loss. They had before them his sworn testimony. The Grand Jury in fixing the award at £175 evidently considered that the circumstances justified it.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. Joyce, R.M., Mr. Horne, R.M., and District Inspector Concannon were engaged in Dublin Castle during August and September last, in taking the evidence of police witnesses for the *Times*; whether Head Constable Hussey, of Belfast, was engaged in making a note of the evidence so taken; whether district inspectors, head constables, sergeants, and constables, were ordered by the Inspector General to report themselves at his office for the purpose of the proceedings conducted by Mr. Joyce, R.M., Mr. Horne, R.M., and District Inspector Concannon; whether the Inspector General issued communications to certain officers of the Constabulary Force to order the men of the Force under their command to be on the alert, in order to get up evidence for the *Times*; whether Head Constables Redington, of Castleisland, and Preston, of Westport, were engaged for a long time in the counties of Clare, Roscommon, Kerry, and Limerick, in looking for witnesses and arranging evidence on behalf of the *Times*; whether the Inspector General came to London, and conferred with the managers of the *Times* case as to the course of evidence; and whether County Inspector Lopdell, District Inspector Concannon, and Head Constable McCoy, of Kildare, have been in London, not as witnesses, but as agents of the *Times*, in charge of informers and other witnesses, and for what period each of these officers was in London on this business?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The officials referred to were not employed in the manner alleged in the question. Particulars as to how they were engaged have been already supplied in reply to various questions. The Inspector General did not order any officials to report themselves at his office for the purpose suggested in the question, nor were any orders issued to certain officers by the Inspector General to order them to be on the alert to get up evidence for the *Times*. Head Constables Redington and Preston were not engaged in the manner suggested. The Inspector General did not come to London, and did not confer with the managers of the *Times'* case as to the course of evidence. County Inspector Lopdell, District Inspector J. Concannon, and Head Constable M'Coy attended on subpœna as witnesses and not as agents of the *Times*.

Mr. J. MORLEY: May I ask if there was a circular issued from Colonel Turner's office to officers of the Constabulary force in Clare giving instructions to get up evidence for the *Times?*

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, I cannot believe that it was so, but I have no information upon the subject. If the right hon. Gentleman will put a question down I will make inquiry.

Mr. SEXTON: How does the right hon. Gentleman account for the prolonged presence in London of Inspectors Lopdell and Concannon and Head Constable M'Coy, seeing that neither of those officers was examined? Has he founded the answers which he has given upon information received from the officers themselves; and will the right hon. Gentleman afford us any means of getting at the truth of the matter?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall be most happy to consider any statement the hon. Gentleman may make to me. As to the officers mentioned, I presume that they were kept in London by the *Times* on account of the evidence they were expected to give. Why they were not called I cannot say.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the visit made by Thompson to James Mullett at Millbank Prison took place in the presence of an officer of the prison; if so, did that officer prepare a record of what passed at that interview between Thompson and Mullett; and, if so, would that record be placed at the disposal of the solicitor for the defendants before the Special Commission; upon whose application was the visit granted to Thompson, and on what authority; was Thompson a solicitor; and, had James Mullett any other visitor at Millbank Prison than his wife and Thompson?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): The visit was in sight of an officer, but not in his hearing; consequently there is no record of what transpired at the interview. The application was made by Mr. Soames, and it was granted on the authority of the Prison Commissioners. I have no knowledge of Mr. Thompson's professional calling. He is described by Mr. Soames as his representative. The answer to the last paragraph is in the negative.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: The right hon. Gentleman gave us to understand the other day that this permission was only given to solicitors. If Thompson was not a solicitor, how was it that he got leave?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at whose instigation did Sergeant Mullen, R.I.C., at Ballyhaunis, county Mayo, write to Patrick Lavan, late of Ballyhaunis, now living at Washington Territory, U.S.A., expressing anxiety to do him a good turn, and stating, "I guarantee your name will never be mentioned, and I further guarantee that it will be the means of putting you on your feet. I saw the chance, and as it could be done privately, I wish to give it to you, and I trust you won't be, as of old, foolish enough not to accept it when you can do so without a third party knowing it;" was it in the interest of the *Times'* case, now pending before the

Special Commission Mullen sought evidence from Lavan; if not, for what other purpose; and was that the first and last time Mullen endeavoured to tempt Patrick Lavan to become an informer?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A question on the same subject has already been answered. It was not in the interest of the *Times* Mullen communicated with Lavan, and it is not usual to disclose the particulars connected with obtaining information from informants, as to do so would paralyze the action of the police, and frustrate the ends of justice.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: Would the right hon. Gentleman note that he has not answered my question regarding the last paragraph?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is not in the interests of the public justice, as I have already stated, to answer it.

FATHER KENNEDY.

MR. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Father Kennedy, of Meelin, during his first imprisonment, applied repeatedly to the Prisons Board for permission to celebrate mass on weekdays, and was informed that the permission would not be granted except for Sundays and church holidays; whether, during his second imprisonment, Father Kennedy was allowed to celebrate mass on one day in each week in addition to Sundays and holidays; what is the rule on the subject; and, what is the present practice with regard to priests imprisoned under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board inform me that the reply to the inquiries in the first two paragraphs is in the affirmative. There is no fixed rule on the subject; but the practice is for the Governor to submit each case specially as it arises to the Board, who deal with it according to the circumstances.

LEVEL CROSSINGS.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the danger and inconvenience of the level crossing of the Great Western Railway near Mr. Ward Williams' Foundry at Abertillery, Monmouthshire, and about 100 yards south-east of the Abertillery Station of this railway; whether it is a fact that already four persons have lost their lives at such crossing; whether he is aware that at the inquest upon the body of John Thomas, one of the persons killed at such crossing, the jury called the attention of the railway company to the want of gates at this level crossing, and that the company replied that the matter should be remedied; whether it is the fact, notwithstanding the reply of the company, the danger of the said crossing still continues; whether he is also aware that the foot passengers over such level crossing amount to an average of 1,000 (of whom 300 are children) during a day of 12 hours, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and whether the Board of Trade will take steps to compel the railway company to erect a foot and cart bridge over such level crossing, or to do such works as will reduce the danger of such crossing?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: It appears that there are two level crossings near Abertillery; one is a level crossing to the south-east of the station. We have no record, nor have the company, of any person having lost his life at that crossing. A footbridge exists for passengers, and there are level crossing gates and a man in charge. Under powers recently obtained from Parliament the Company are enabled to carry both the road and footpath under the line by a subway, and the works have recently been commenced. As the crossing has been reported to be dangerous, the Board of Trade will represent to the company the expediency of finishing these works without delay. There is another level crossing, called the Peny-bont Crossing, half a mile to the north of the station. The only death which has occurred at this crossing, and respecting which the Board of Trade have any information, is that of John Thomas, a trespasser, who was killed in 1876. This level crossing was handed over to the company by the Monmouthshire Company as a mere occupation level crossing, but the company have expressed their willingness to contribute to the expense of erecting a bridge. The Board of Trade have no powers of compulsion in the matter, but as this level crossing also is dangerous the Board of Trade will continue to press on the company the importance of the erection of a bridge independently of any contribution from the locality.

CONVEYANCE OF LETTERS.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil) asked the Postmaster General if he could now state the results of the inquiry of the Departmental Committee appointed to consider the question of the conveyance by railway companies of letters that have not passed through the post?

*Mr. RAIKES: The subject to which the hon. Member refers has been under the careful consideration of the Government. It is attended by legal questions which involve considerable difficulties, but I am not without hopes of arriving at a satisfactory settlement.

CUSTOMS' OFFICERS.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether it was proposed to confirm the experimental alterations of the hours of labour of Customs' officers on landing and shipping duty in the ports of Liverpool, Hull, and Grimsby, and to extend them to London and other ports of the Kingdom; and, if so, whether the officers receive any compensation for such an unfavourable alteration of the conditions under which they entered the Customs' Service; whether officers of Customs employed upon warehousing duty from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Port of Newcastle, have recently been called upon to attend on landing duty from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. without additional remuneration, before doing their ordinary day's work; and, whether the Customs' authorities, in compelling such additional attendance, have acted in accordance with the assurance of the Government that, in any alterations which might be made to meet the requirements of trade, landing officers would not be compelled to work more than eight hours per day on the average?

Mr. JACKSON: The question of the confirmation of the extended landing and shipping hours which have been in experimental operation at the ports of Liverpool, Hull, Grimsby, and Goole for some months, and for the extension of these hours to London and other ports of the Kingdom, is now under the consideration of the Treasury. Those hours under the scheme proposed will not involve an addition to the average number of hours of daily attendance on the part of officers of Customs employed on landing and shipping stations, and no question of compensation arises. The new system, to which the assurance mentioned in the last paragraph of the right hon. Member's question referred, has not been introduced at Newcastle; but officers of Customs ordinarily employed on warehouse duty at that port have for many years been required, in times of pressure, occasionally to attend during the summer months on early landing duty without additional remuneration.

LETTERS TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that letters for British sailors at Sydney and other ports on the Australian station are now forwarded by the long sea route for 1d. each letter; and whether he is aware that no notice of this has been issued to the public, though it affects a large number of poor people?

*Mr. RAIKES: The fact is as stated by the hon. Member, and I may add that, under certain regulations, not only letters for seamen in Her Majesty's Service in Australian ports are forwarded for the privileged rate of one penny, but also by any all-sea route to any British Colony or foreign country, as may be seen on reference to the "Post Office Guide." The privilege thus enjoyed by seamen in Her Majesty's Service is one of long standing, and, being generally known, there was no necessity for issuing a special Postal Notice as regards letters forwarded to Australia by the all-sea route.

NEW LIGHTHOUSES.

Mr. LYELL (Orkney and Shetland) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether anything had been done to carry out the recommendation of the Northern Lights Commission in the Report of their Engineers, Messrs. D. and T. Stevenson, in October, 1883, that 11 new lighthouses should be erected on the coasts of Orkney and Shetland?

*Sir MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: The Engineers' Report referred to involved an expenditure of £192,000, and £6,500 for annual maintenance. The

Northern Lights Commissioners forwarded it to the Board of Trade in 1884, with approval, but without any statutory recommendation, doubtless feeling that it was too expensive to be carried out in its entirety. But one of the most important parts of it—the establishment of a light on Malcolm's Head, Fair Island, is included in the Estimates for new work in the coming financial year.

WEIR *v.* WEIR.

MR. CALDWELL asked the Lord Advocate whether, in the case of Weir against Weir, in the Sheriff Court of Caithness, the Sheriff Substitute decided in favour of the defender in respect of facts brought out in the portion of the written evidence in the case which is amissing; whether Sheriff Depute Thoms, when the case was before him on appeal, reversed the decision of the Sheriff Substitute, decided in favour of the pursuer, and cut out and abstracted from the process the evidence, or portion of the evidence, on which the Sheriff Substitute relied in support of his decision in the case; whether, in Scotland, the Judge of an inferior Court, in a case subject to the review of a superior Court, has any right whatever to cut out and abstract from the process, or to cancel beyond recognition, any portion of the written evidence taken in the cause by the Judge of the first instance, and upon which the decision of the Judge of the first instance rested; whether he will cause Sheriff Thoms to restore to the process the evidence, or at least an authentic copy of the evidence, cut out and abstracted by him, and which he (Sheriff Thoms) states "was not destroyed but is amissing;" and, whether he will institute an independent investigation with the view of ascertaining the true facts as to the number of pages of evidence so cut out and abstracted, as to whether the same were or were not torn up by Sheriff Thoms, and as to what he did with, or what became of, the pages of evidence so cut out and abstracted?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Buteshire): I have communicated with the Sheriff, and am informed that the Sheriff Substitute pronounced findings which were, in part, based on the portion of the evidence now amissing, and which would have led to a remit to an accountant. The Sheriff held this evidence to be irrelevant, and, as I have already informed the hon. Gentleman, the sheet containing it was cut out—was not abstracted by the Sheriff, and has gone amissing. In these circumstances the question of law raised in the third paragraph does not arise. An appeal was taken against the Sheriff's decision to the Court of Session, but was abandoned. In that appeal complete redress could have been obtained against any error on the part of the Sheriff in the proceedings which are the subject of the question. The Court of Session, and not the Lord Advocate, is the proper authority to correct any irregularities which may have caused a grievance to those legitimately concerned. I therefore answer the last two queries in the negative.

TELEGRAPHISTS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General what is the actual charge in respect to the first-class telegraphists at the Central Telegraph Office for the expiring financial year; whether the estimate was calculated to include provision from April last for 384 first-class telegraphists, and what is the difference; what was the number of the class on 31st January, how many vacancies there are, and how long they have remained open; whether he received a petition in December from the second class telegraphists for their promotion; and whether there is anything to prevent him complying with the request contained in the memorial?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the actual charge in respect of first-class telegraphists at the Central Telegraph Office for the current financial year cannot yet be precisely stated, but it will be less than the estimate. It is difficult, in the form of an answer to a question, to give the hon. Member full information on all the points to which he refers. Since the Estimates of the expiring financial year were framed an addition has been made to the establishment of the Central Telegraph Office, and the authorized number of the first class at the present time is 365. In this class of 365 persons there were on the 31st of January last 53 vacancies. To 34 of these I have made promotions within the last few days; and this, practically, is an answer to the petition of December.

POSTAGE TO NEW ZEALAND.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON asked the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that the rate of postage for letters to New Zealand by sea, per Orient Company, is 4d. per half ounce; and also by sea, but per the New Zealand Company's steamers, is 6d. per ounce; whether it is a fact that the letters are put on board each line of steamers at the same port (Plymouth), and that the letters bearing the 4d. rate often arrive in quicker time than those letters bearing the 6d. postage rate; and whether he will take steps to remedy this state of things?

*MR. RAIKES: The fourpenny rate recently adopted for letters sent to Australia and New Zealand by the long sea route applies only to such letters as are forwarded by the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company and of the Orient Company. Without the concurrence of the New Zealand Government, Her Majesty's Government would not be in a position to extend the fourpenny rate to letters forwarded by the New Zealand Company's steamers from Plymouth, and I have been officially informed that the Colonial Government is unable to agree to the reduction of postage without the authority of the Colonial Parliament. Mails by both the Orient and New Zealand Company's steamers are embarked at Plymouth. I have no reason to believe that the fourpenny letters going *viâ* Adelaide often reach New Zealand before the sixpenny letters going direct, but I have no positive information on the point.

MR. P. J. CONLAN.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been called to the imprisonment of Mr. P. J. Conlan, proprietor of the Carlow *Nationalist*, for publishing the proceedings of an unsuppressed branch of the Irish National League; by virtue of what statute has the punishment been inflicted; and, what was the nature of the evidence against the accused?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not been able to obtain the information, and must ask the hon. Gentleman to put the question down for to-morrow.

THE ZAMBESI.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it was a fact that Senor Castilloes had been sent by the Portuguese Government to the Zambesi, and is charged by them to make a survey for a railway past the cataracts of the Shiré; whether the territory through which such a railway would pass was beyond the Ruo River, and is in the exclusive occupation of British settlements; whether the Ruo had been previously recognized in communications between Her Majesty's Government and Portugal as the extreme boundary of Portuguese territory in the direction of the interior; and, whether the Government would decline to recognize any claim to territorial sovereignty on the part of Portugal in the district between the Ruo and Lake Nyassa?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): We have no reason to believe that a survey is to be made for a line of railway past the Shiré Cataracts, but if this was so it would be below the confluence of the Ruo and Shiré. The confluence of these rivers was fixed as the boundary of Portuguese territory in the Agreement of 1884 between this country and Portugal; but that Agreement was not ratified, and, therefore, is not in force. Portugal has hitherto exercised no functions of sovereignty or protectorate in the region mentioned.

ROYAL MARINE ARTILLERY.

MR. BUCHANAN asked the Firs Lord of the Admiralty whether it is a fact that, notwithstanding the announcement in Regimental Orders, by authority of the Admiralty, that subalterns of the Royal Marine Artillery are eligible for appointment to the Indian Staff Corps and Army Service Corps, the Admiralty refuses to entertain any application from Marine Artillery subalterns for employment in the corps named; on what grounds are these officers debarred from the privileges expressly declared to be open to them; and will the Admiralty, if the present practice is to be adhered to, notify publicly, for the information of candidates and their parents and guardians, that subalterns of the Royal Marine Artillery are not allowed any opening outside the limits of their own corps?

LORD G. HAMILTON: There is a regulation which states that "a certain proportion of officers of the Royal Marines are permitted to take service in the Indian Staff Corps and in the Commissariat and Transport Staff," and this has been allowed. But it was decided two years ago that, on account of the paucity of numbers and also of their costly education, it was desirable in the public interest that officers of the Royal Marine Artillery should be reserved for the special duties for which they had been trained. This decision is perfectly well known by the corps, and it is not proposed to take any further steps as to its publication.

RAILWAY MAXIMUM CHARGES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the President of the Board of Trade if, having regard to the great difficulty Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture, and other public bodies, have in ascertaining the statutory maximum charges of railway companies under a variety of Acts obtained over a long series of years, he can either cause a table of such charges to be prepared, or prevail upon the railway companies to issue one, in a form facilitating comparison by those interested with the proposed maximum rates under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act.

***SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH**: The companies have transmitted statements made out in a tabular form as far as possible, showing the existing statutory maximum rates. These statements were not in the first instance supplied to the public, but I caused representations to be made to the companies, and they have undertaken to supply them.

THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in filling the vacancy in the Presidency of Queen's College, Belfast, he will have regard to the scholastic and literary attainments of the candidates rather than to their religious or theological opinions?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no doubt the Lord Lieutenant will, in making the submission of a name, give due weight to all the circumstances of the case.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I trust that the Lord Lieutenant will take into consideration the claims of distinguished men who have been educated in the University.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can add nothing to the answer I have already given.

HORSE ARTILLERY.

GENERAL FRASER (Lambeth, N.) asked the Secretary of State for War, in view of his statement on the reduction of the Horse Artillery in 1887, that no batteries of the Second Army Corps would be drawn upon for the First Army Corps, whether the attenuated service batteries of Horse Artillery at Home, including the First Army Corps batteries, had lately been called upon to furnish men for the Indian Horse Artillery drafts despatched in February; if so, in what numbers; and, if so, in what manner and from what source the vacancies thus caused in the First Army Corps batteries had been filled up?

***MR. STANHOPE**: Yes, Sir. It has been found necessary to draw upon the service batteries of Horse Artillery at home to furnish drafts for India in consequence of abnormal demands for men to complete batteries in India. By an unfortunate coincidence of time we are losing at once men engaged for periods of eight and of seven years. The vacancies thus caused are in course of being filled up by recruits, by gunners from the Garrison Artillery depôts, and by drivers from the Field Artillery depôts. The batteries will be completed very shortly.

LOANS TO CROFTERS.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) asked the Lord Advocate whether he was aware that several crofters in Caithness applied for loans to the Fishery Board, and received in reply a letter, stating "that certain difficulties have arisen in connection with granting of a number of loans applied for which require great consideration on the part of the Board, but as soon as their decision has been given it will be communicated to you in due course." Could he state what was the difficulty which prevents the loans being granted; and, whether that difficulty would be removed in time to get boats before the fishing season begins?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The difficulty in the way of the Fishery Board proceeding to dispose of the applications was the question about the proportion of value to be advanced on certain boats, and that question has now been disposed of as explained on Monday the 18th in my answer to the question of the hon. Members for Ross and Sutherland.

DR. CLARK: Only last year the Treasury agreed, and the hon. Gentleman who represents the Treasury stated that the Government were going to advance the money, and I want to know why a delay has arisen.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The maximum terms agreed upon by the Secretary for Scotland were nine-tenths, but certain modifications of the rules were suggested by the Fishery Board and the Secretary of State is going to modify them.

DR. CLARK: When the Fishery Vote comes on, I will move the reduction of the salary of the Chairman of the Fishery Board.

IRELAND—REGISTRATION OF TITLES BILL.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether he proposes to introduce his Bill for the Registration of Titles in Ireland before the Easter Recess?

MR. MADDEN: No, Sir; but I should be glad to confer with the hon. Gentleman if he has any suggestion to make.

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON (Dundee) asked the First Commissioner of Works, what was the actual date of the alleged agreement between the Treasury and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales with reference to the maintenance and repair of Marlborough House; was the agreement in writing; had it ever been submitted to the House of Commons; and, if so, on what occasion; and, would he lay upon the Table a copy of the agreement?

*MR. PLUNKET: There was no "agreement" between the Treasury and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales as to the maintenance and repairs of Marlborough House, nor has any one, so far as I know, alleged the existence of any such agreement. I stated the other night that in 1878 Her Majesty's Government decided that in consideration of the large expenditure already incurred by His Royal Highness in improving the house, it should thenceforward be placed on the same footing as Clarence House, and that accordingly the cost of ordinary maintenance and repairs, external and internal, should be annually provided in the Estimates, the cost of fittings and furniture being borne by His Royal Highness. That decision of the Treasury was embodied in a Minute dated the 30th August, 1878, and if the hon. Member likes to move for it, there will be no objection to lay it on the Table. The result of that Minute was submitted to Parliament in the form of a Vote in the Estimates of the year 1879-80, and attention having been called to the item, it appeared to receive the unanimous approval of the Committee of Supply. The question was again raised in 1884, and the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), having given exactly the same explanation of all the circumstances as I gave the other night, the Vote was agreed to and has ever since been annually voted.

THE "FROG'S MARCH."

MR. PICKERSGILL, who had a question on the paper in reference to the death of Samuel Mahoney, who is alleged to have died while being subjected to the "frog's march," said, he had to thank the Home Secretary for having ordered a further medical examination. He also wished to know what steps the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take in reference to the personal testimony of the hon. Member for North Roscommon (Mr. O'Kelly)?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am afraid that the occurrence to which the hon. Gentleman alludes is wholly exceptional. I stated to the House briefly yesterday the extraordinary violence which had been displayed by this unfortunate man, and I do not know that there are any ordinary rules which would meet such a case.

THE CARMARTHENSHIRE POLICE.

MR. RANDELL (Glamorgan, Gower) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Mr. W. Picton Phillips, Superintendent of Police in Carmarthenshire, prior to his appointment to that office, was in receipt of salary as clerk to his father, the Chief Constable of Carmarthenshire; and, if so, what was his age when he first received it; and whether another son of the Chief Constable of Carmarthenshire, who has not yet attained his majority, was in receipt of pay of a first-class constable; and, if so, whether he had been duly sworn in, and discharged the full and ordinary duties of such constable; and, if not, why not?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Chief Constable that Mr. Superintendent Phillips was sworn in, and appointed to the rank of Inspector, rendered vacant by the death of his clerk in April, 1883, his age being then a little over 17 years, and he received pay as such until his promotion to Superintendent. On the 26th March last the Chief Constable appointed another of his sons as clerk in his office, and allowed him the pay of a first-class constable. He was not sworn in, and discharges the duty of clerk only. I have written to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions and invited his attention to the questions that have been addressed to me with regard to these appointments.

PURCHASE OF LAND, IRELAND.

MR. WOOTTON ISAACSON (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he would consent to the Motion for a Return relating to purchase of land in Ireland, which stands on the Paper for to-day?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There was a Return presented on the 19th of March which gives all the particulars up to the end of December, 1888. I therefore hope that my hon. Friend will not press for the Return on the paper.

FISHERY RIGHTS IN ALASKA.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government had any information as to the sale at Port Townshend of the three sealing schooners *Grace*, *Dolphin*, and *Annie Beck*, arrested in 1887 in Behring's Sea, and condemned in the Alaskan Courts for violation of the alleged fishery rights of the territory of Alaska; and, if these sales had taken place, whether any appeal was still possible to the Supreme Court of the United States?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government are informed that the sale of the three schooners referred to was ordered in the interest of all concerned and with the concurrence of the owners. Her Majesty's Government have not received any information as to whether the sale has actually taken place. The owners have taken no steps for exercising the right of appeal, and have allowed the period limited by law for that purpose to elapse; but the question of international right involved in the seizure of the schooners remains for discussion through the diplomatic channel.

SCIENCE AND ART MUSEUM IN IRELAND.

DR. TANNER asked the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether any final determination had been come to, and under what circumstances the visitors of the Science and Art Museum in Ireland were to be permitted or called upon to fulfil their functions; and, whether any steps had been or were being taken to obviate and annul the recent misunderstanding?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The visitors of the Science and Art Museum in Dublin are, and always have been, permitted, and called upon, and given every facility to perform all the functions imposed upon them by the Science and Art Museum Act of 1877, and the agreement of 1881, made in accordance therewith. The Lord President will, I may add, endeavour to recognize the position of the visitors to the fullest extent compatible with the limits I have mentioned.

COURTS MARTIAL IN IRELAND.

DR. TANNER asked the Secretary of State for War if it was a fact that, on the occasion of the recent Court martial, held in Cork, on soldiers of the 4th

Hussars and Welsh Regiments, the Press were refused admission to the Court; and, whether, under similar circumstances, it had been the rule to exclude the Press?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The General Officer commanding states, in a telegram, that the Press was not refused.

DR. TANNER: Does that reply include the *Cork Daily Herald* and the *Cork Examiner*, or only the Conservative newspapers?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I imagine that the *Cork Herald* is a newspaper, and therefore represents the Press.

MR. W. REDMOND: As there is a direct contradiction, will the right hon. Gentleman cause further inquiry to be made?

MR. SEXTON: What is the rule as to the admission or exclusion of the Press?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I believe there is no general rule. The Press are usually admitted.

MR. SEXTON: Does the officer in command determine the matter?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I imagine that the Court Martial itself would settle the matter; but I should like to have notice of the question.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA—CHIEF JUSTICE ONSLOW.

MR. LANE asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what arrangements had been made for filling Chief Justice Onslow's position during his absence from the Colony of Western Australia; had the Secretary of State for the Colonies considered several declarations as to the dissatisfaction felt in the Colony at the manner in which Mr. Leake acted upon former occasions; and had he taken any steps to prevent any appointment being made which would give occasion for similar dissatisfaction?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): Nothing definite is known at the Colonial Office as to Chief Justice Onslow coming away from Western Australia. The declarations referred to by the hon. Member are, I presume, the *ex parte* statements sent by him to the Secretary of State, who read them and referred them to the Governor for his consideration. The responsibility of selecting the person in all respects best qualified to act as a Judge of the Supreme Court in the temporary absence of one of the Judges must rest with the Governor; and the Secretary of State cannot undertake to decide what arrangement may at the time best conduce to the proper and efficient administration of justice.

EMIGRATION TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

MR. LANE asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he would try and get some guarantee from the representative of the Argentine Republic in London that proper measures will be taken to provide for the reception of the large number of Irish emigrants who are about to sail for Buenos Ayres next week?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Argentine Minister in this country can give no special guarantee of the nature indicated. The Argentine Government have published regulations which, if fulfilled, appear to furnish satisfactory safeguards. As I stated on Tuesday, the discomfort of the immigrants on a recent occasion was owing to unforeseen circumstances, and was only temporary. Her Majesty's Government are providing for the observation of British immigrants by a special office under Her Majesty's Minister.

MR. LANE: Emigrants have been induced to leave Ireland by representatives of the Argentine Republic in Ireland, and I would ask, therefore, whether the Republic is not responsible for due provision being made for them on their arrival?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No doubt that would be so, but the Government have no reason to believe that the expectations that have been held out have not been fulfilled. A number of emigrants disembarked when the barracks were already full, and temporary accommodation was provided for them. News have been received by the Minister of the Argentine Republic that all these persons were in a few days forwarded to their destination. Full Reports have been received from our Chargés d'Affaires, and I shall be happy to show them to the hon. Member.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Have not complaints been received from emigrants who went from England in July stating that they have been grossly deceived, that they have been paid with paper money, that they have suffered from extreme want, and have been unable to get away from the port?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No Reports to that effect have been received from our Minister, but a returned emigrant has called at the Foreign Office and stated that he had been unable to get employment in his particular trade, which was that of a manufacturer of coloured glass; but he called in consequence of the published complaints to state that nothing could exceed the kindness with which he was treated by the authorities and by British residents.

MR. J. O'CONNOR: How is it, if there is nothing to be complained of, that the French Government have interfered to prevent French emigrants going to the Republic?

MR. BRADLAUGH: Is it not the fact that some months ago Belgian emigrants to the Republic were warned by an official notice in Brussels of the evils that are now complained of?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am aware that a notice was issued by the Belgian Government that they had appointed agents in Belgium to give information to intending emigrants to the Argentine Republic. I will make inquiry in regard to the other matters which have been mentioned.

THE NAVAL PROGRAMME.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the items of expenditure referred to in the side-heading No. 4, pages 4 and 5, of the Parliamentary Return, "Naval Expenditure," No. 444, 1888, viz., "Armaments, including fittings," differ in any respects from the items of expenditure referred to in the new Naval Programme, under the designation "Armaments," the aggregate cost of which for the ships of the Programme is to be £5,350,000; and, if so, what items were excluded in one case and included in the other?

LORD G. HAMILTON: In reply to the hon. Member's question, Return No. 444 gave, as is stated in the note, only the expenditure on ships which was provided out of Naval Votes. The armaments were provided for in the Army Estimates up to last year. Under the heading "Armaments" in the new Naval Programme, all the Ordnance stores are now included, as they are provided for under Vote 9, Navy Estimates.

SIR E. J. REED asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the battle ships of the first class proposed under the New Programme were, in so far as their thick side-armour was concerned, to be protected to the height of the upper deck in wake of the engines and boilers, like the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*, and other ships of the *Dreadnought* type, or whether their thick armour at that part was to be limited to a water line belt, rising no higher than the main deck, as was the case in the vessels of the *Admiral* type; and, if so, what were the respective heights above water to which the thick armour would be carried in the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*, and in the proposed ships?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The facts as to the disposition of the armour in the new designs for first-class battle ships have been given in Parliamentary Paper C. 5,648, pages 4 and 5, also in Parliamentary Paper C. 5,635, paragraphs 8-11, page 5, and in clause 3, page 10. By these Papers it will be seen that the answer to the first part of the question is in the negative; to the second part that the height of the thick-belt armour is to be 3ft. above water, with an additional height of 5-inch armour, making a total of 9½ft. above water. The answer to the third part of the question is: for the *Nile* and the *Trafalgar* about 10ft. as completed, for the new ships about 3ft.

THE CARDIFF SAVINGS BANK.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention had been called to a notice issued by the official liquidator of the Cardiff Savings Bank, requiring the irregular depositors "to come in and prove the debt claimed, by filing an affidavit," and to attend by solicitor at the High Court of Justice in London on 10th April; whether he was aware that the deposit books, which were in themselves *bonâ fide* evidence of the claims of depositors, were in the hands of the official liquidator, or of the representatives of the bank; and whether, having regard to the fact that these depositors were poor persons, some other mode of proof of claim could be arranged, so that these poor people should not be deprived of their lawful dues?

MR. DAVID THOMAS asked if the right hon. Gentleman was aware of the expense and trouble the depositors in the late Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank were being put to in order to prove their claims; and whether the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt were taking any steps to carry out the recommendation of Mr. Lyulph Stanley, the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Cardiff Trustee Savings Bank, as given on page 63 of his Report; whether he could state the amount by which, according to the Commissioner, the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt

> "have been defrauded by the trustees, both by the loss of forfeitures resulting from the omission to enforce signed declarations, and by the large sums invested and drawing interest in excess of the sums the trustees were entitled to invest, and to whom yearly false statements have been returned by the trustees and managers;"

and whether, seeing that these yearly false statements were returned through carelessness, and placing too much confidence in their actuary, and not wilfully, he was prepared to advise the National Debt Commissioners to forego their claim, provided that the trustees and managers pay all claims of depositors in full?

***THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER** (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): My attention has been called to the notice in question, but I must once more remind the hon. Member that I have no right and no power to interfere with the course of the liquidation or the mode of proof which the Court considers necessary. The procedure laid down by the Act must be followed, and the directions of the Court in carrying out that Act must be obeyed. The liquidator has addressed a letter to the irregular depositors pointing out the method by which their claim might be presented to the Court at small cost to each individual. The liquidator is ready to give any information in his power to the depositors, and it would be more advantageous to the depositors and their friends to apply for information to him than to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The fact that some of the deposit books (there are others which cannot be traced) are in the liquidator's hands will not invalidate the evidence which those books afford of the amount of the deposits. The recommendation of Mr. Lyulph Stanley was that a Petition should be presented to the National Debt Commissioners for the winding-up of the Bank under the Companies Act. This has long since been done. I cannot state the exact amount of the claims of the National Debt Commissioners against the Bank, but I am inclined to think that if the trustees and managers were now, without further delay, to make good to all the depositors the unpaid balance of their deposits, these claims might reasonably be waived.

MR. HOWELL: I have no complaint to make of the Treasury as to the way in which they have taken up the case on behalf of the poor depositors; but as the depositors' books are in the hands of the accountant, I think that fact ought to be regarded as *bonâ fide* evidence of their claims.

***MR. GOSCHEN**: Neither the hon. Member nor myself, I am afraid, has sufficient knowledge of the law to enable us to say whether that is so or not. I am informed it is necessary that further proof should be given, but it is for the Court to decide. If we can exert any influence to promote the interests of the *bonâ fide* depositors we shall be glad to do so.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF FEMALE PRISONERS.

MR. MAC NEILL asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could state why the two untried female prisoners from Gweedore—Margaret Cull and Annie Doherty—who were on Friday week—notwithstanding the remonstrance of the Rev. J. Doherty, the Prison Chaplain—deprived by the Governor of Derry Gaol of warm-clothing provided for them for the journey between Derry and Letterkenny, were again deprived last Saturday of dresses and hats provided for them by friends; whether, in spite of the promise of the Solicitor General, the Governor, while allowing them shawls, refused to permit them to wear the hats and warm dresses so provided for them; and whether they were obliged to go from Derry to Letterkenny bareheaded and badly clothed in inclement weather, though sufficient clothing was sent into the prison for their use?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the two prisoners mentioned were, on the occasion in question, amply provided with warm clothing and warm shawls over their heads—the usual head dress of the peasant women in Gweedore. The Governor withheld the clothing referred to, as, while not required for warmth, it was, in his opinion, calculated to interfere with the prisoners' identification. As I have already explained, the prisoners travelled neither bare-headed nor badly clothed, and it appears they were conveyed in a covered vehicle to the railway station at Derry, and then by train to Letterkenny, returning in the same way. It is possible that the Governor may have made an error of judgment, but it is perfectly clear that every consideration of humanity was attended to, and ample provision was made for the comfort of the prisoners.

MR. MAC NEILL: Is it the fact that the Governor did refuse to allow these poor women to wear the warm clothing with which their friends supplied them with? I should also like to know under what circumstances the Governor has power to interfere with untried prisoners in any way whatever?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already answered the first part of the question. As to the legal part of the question, I cannot answer it without notice.

MR. O'HANLON: It is not the fact that the wearing of shawls over their heads is the usual head-dress of the peasant women of Gweedore.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

MR. JEFFREYS: I beg to ask the noble Lord the Vice Chamberlain whether 140 sheep infected with foot-and-mouth disease have been landed at West Hartlepool from Germany; whether sheep or cattle infected with this disease have been landed at any other ports of the United Kingdom; what precautions towards preventing the spread of this disease in the United Kingdom have been taken; and whether the ships which conveyed these diseased animals have been thoroughly disinfected?

*THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount LEWISHAM, Lewisham): It is true that 147 sheep were landed at the Foreign Animals Wharf at Hartlepool on the 21st inst., from Hamburg, among which the Inspector of the Privy Council at that port detected 20 cases of foot-and-mouth disease. The same disease has been discovered among sheep from Germany landed at the foreign animals wharves in Grimsby, Hull, and London. As soon as the disease was detected the whole of the cargoes were ordered to be slaughtered forthwith, and the rules set forth in the sixth schedule to the Animals Order of 1886, which apply when foot-and-mouth disease is detected among animals in a foreign animals wharf, have been strictly enforced. The vessels which brought these diseased sheep to Hartlepool and Grimsby have been thoroughly cleansed and disinfected under the supervision of Inspectors of the Privy Council. It is not known to what extent the vessels which brought the diseased sheep to London have been cleansed and disinfected, but it may be observed that Germany having been added to the list of prohibited countries by the Order of Council passed on the 23rd inst., vessels which have been engaged in carrying animals from that country cannot be again used for carrying animals from any country to Great Britain for a period of 28 days.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I wish to ask another question which arises out of the one just put to the noble Lord. I will ask him under what circumstances four cargoes of sheep suffering from foot-and-mouth disease have been allowed to land at Hartlepool, Hull, Grimsby, and Deptford, from Germany; and whether, having regard to the fact that the disease must be prevalent in Germany, and the risk of its extending to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government will consider the propriety of cancelling the Order of March 1st, 1889?

*VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: The cargoes of sheep referred to were landed at the foreign animals wharves in the ports mentioned under the conditions set forth in the Animals Order of 1886. Until these animals arrived the Privy Council was not aware that foot-and-mouth disease prevailed in Germany, and the Netherlands Government have satisfied the Privy Council that their country is free from disease, and that every reasonable precaution has been taken to prevent the introduction of disease into their country by the absolute prohibition of the importation into or transit through the Netherlands of all animals from every country on the Continent of Europe. Under these circumstances the Privy Council, after full consideration, came to the conclusion that they had no option, under the terms of the fourth part of the fifth schedule to the Act of 1878, but to admit the claim of the Netherlands Government to have their animals exempted from slaughter at the point of landing.

MR. CHAPLIN: Can the noble Lord give the House any guarantee that the information of the Government in regard to the condition of affairs in the Netherlands in that matter is likely to be more accurate than their information in regard to Germany?

MR. J. LOWTHER: Will the noble Lord say what steps Her Majesty's Government propose to take to assure themselves that the disease does not prevail in the Netherlands?

*VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: We have the fullest information from the Netherlands, and we are assured that they have eliminated the disease at a considerable cost, and there is little doubt that this has been the case for a long time.

MR. CHAPLIN: May I ask on what information the Government have based their action?

*VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: Since 1877 German sheep have been admitted for slaughter, but the right hon. Gentleman had better give notice of any further question he wishes to put. The Privy Council have no desire whatever to conceal anything.

MR. CHAPLIN: I will put a further question on the subject on Monday to the noble Lord.

SIR W. BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.): May I ask the noble Lord whether he knows that the Government of the Netherlands have prevented German cattle from going into the Netherlands?

*VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: Yes; I thought I had already answered that point.

CONTINENTAL TELEGRAPH CABLES.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he can now inform the House what are the terms on which the telegraph cables to the Continent are taken over; and whether the valuation is based on the actual present value of the plant?

*MR. JACKSON: I am desired by the Postmaster General to say that the actual price to be paid for submarine telegraph cables is still under discussion, and, consequently, I am not able to furnish the information asked for by the hon. Baronet.

RAILWAY RATES.

MR. CAINE (Barrow-in-Furness): I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade whether it is intended under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, that all or any existing maximum railway mileage rates, which have been authorized by Parliament, may be abrogated, and higher rates substituted for them; and whether special terminal charges may be created in cases where no such charges have been definitely authorized by Parliament nor have been levied as terminals by railway companies?

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH: The rates and charges settled under Section 24 of the Act of last year will, when confirmed by Parliament, be the rates and charges which the railway company in each case will be entitled to make. The section provides that the schedules to be submitted shall state the nature and amounts of all terminal charges proposed to be authorized. It is clearly the intention that terminal charges shall be authorized, but what these are to be, and what the maximum rates are to be, is a matter for discussion and for the decision of Parliament.

WEST AFRICA—OPOBO AND AGENNI CREEK.

MR. HOWORTH (Salford): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the report is well founded that trade has been stopped at the port of Opobo in West Africa, the country blockaded and fined 300 puncheons of oil and £1,000, together with canoes and guns; and whether the Agenni Creek has been shut against the natives for three months, and British intercourse with them prevented; if so, whether these proceedings have been carried out with the sanction and approval of Her Majesty's Government?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Owing to the representations of Her Majesty's Consul that impediments to navigation had been placed in the river leading to Opobo, which it was impossible to get removed by peaceful means, and that certain chiefs were interfering with the freedom of trade, instructions were sent to Her Majesty's Commissioner to the West Coast of Africa and the Admiral Commanding in Chief to inquire into the state of affairs. They reported in favour of forcing the chiefs of Opobo to remove the obstruction, to pay penalties, hand over their war canoes, and security for good behaviour to the amount of £1,000, to be enforced by blockade if necessary. The suggestion was approved, and the result of the blockade has been so far successful that the Consul telegraphed on the 21st inst. that there were hopes of raising it on the 23rd inst. We are waiting further details. We have not heard specially of the closing of Agenni (or Ogoni) Creek.

THE ARREST OF FATHER FARRELLY.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET (East Wicklow) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenamt of Ireland if it is true that the Constabulary broke into the house of the Rev. Father Farrelly at Arklow, early on the morning of the 26th instant, to effect his arrest; whether it is the fact that the reverend gentleman has been performing his duties openly day by day since the warrant was issued several weeks ago; and, what was the object in postponing the execution of the warrant for such a length of time?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have received some information on the subject, but not enough to enable me to answer the whole of this question. I should be glad, therefore, if the hon. Gentleman would postpone it till to-morrow.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has the right hon. Gentleman received information with reference to the question that was asked on this subject yesterday, when the Solicitor General for Ireland promised to inquire as to whether the reverend gentleman wrote to the County Inspector to inform him that he was ready to be arrested, and, if so, how it happened that the warrant remained unexecuted for five weeks?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If the right hon. Gentleman will put his question on the paper, it will be answered along with the question put by the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Wicklow.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

MR. J. G. TALBOT: I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the Department are about to issue new instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the new Code; and, if so, whether he will lay them upon the Table of the House with the least possible delay?

SIR W. HART DYKE: My hon. Friend will see that, as two months have been accorded for the consideration of the Code, and as its principles and details will have to be discussed and decided upon by Parliament, it would be premature to frame instructions to inspectors at this date.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Darwen): May I ask whether it is suggested that the House should discuss the Code without having in its hands the instructions by which it is to be carried out?

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Is it not the fact that, when former Codes were discussed, the instructions to the inspectors were laid on the Table?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I am informed that in no case have the instructions been laid on the Table till subsequently to the passing of the Code. If a question is put at a later stage as to any particular point in the Code I will give an answer.

INDIA—THE CANTONMENT ACT.

MR. JAMES STUART (Hoxton, Shoreditch): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, whether the new Cantonment Act has become law in India; and, if so, whether regulations have yet been drawn up under Clause 29 of that Act, or, if not, what are the regulations, if any, at present in force in cantonments with respect to prostitution?

*SIR J. GORST (Chatham): The Bill has not yet passed into law, and no regulations are at present in force.

ARMY CONTRACTS.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (East Finsbury): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware, as stated in the *Star* of the 26th instant, that the firm of Alexander Ross and Co., of Grange Mills, Bermondsey, who were struck off the list of contractors in March, 1888, have been supplying and manufacturing Government orders for Colonel Wallace, of 139 and 140, Great Dover Road, S.E.; and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made at once into such an irregularity?

MR. STANHOPE: I have given the strictest order that the firm of Messrs. Ross is not to be employed by Colonel Wallace or any other Government contractor. As Colonel Wallace is not a leather manufacturer, he has to buy his leather from the trade. But some time ago, finding that he was purchasing buff leather cut out by Messrs. Ross, I made it a *sine quâ non* that all the work connected with the order—including cutting out—must be executed in Colonel Wallace's factory, although this has involved some increase of cost on the contract.

THE SUGAR BOUNTY CONVENTION.

MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if, in view of the great and important trade interests involved, he can state when the Bill relating to the Sugar Bounty Convention will be introduced?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope it will be in my power to introduce a Bill before Easter.

FOREIGN DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

MR. LANE (County Cork): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now lay upon the Table the information in possession of the Government in reference to the nature and cost of the work done by the Departments of Agriculture in other countries, in accordance with his promise of 16th November last?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The latest information in the possession of the Government in regard to foreign Agricultural Departments is dated 1884, and has already been laid before the House; but steps have been taken to collect further information, which I hope to be able to lay on the Table by Whitsuntide.

MONOPOLIES.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I beg to give notice that, if the Rules of the House permit, I will call attention to this very important subject on the Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill.

NAVAL VOLUNTEERS.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask whether, in view of the declaration of the representative of the Board of Admiralty, that no share of the duties connected with the local defence of our coasts, either by batteries or submarine mines, could be allocated to the Naval Volunteers, because these defences are under the War Department, Her Majesty's Government will consider whether some arrangement can be made for placing all the forces intended for local coast defence under one authority, so that they may work together for the protection of the country?

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: If the hon. Member will refer to the statement I made on the introduction of the Navy Expenses Bill, I think he will find the answer to the question.

THE NAVAL PROGRAMME.

SIR J. PEASE (Barnard Castle): Will the noble Lord state when he proposes to go forward with the Bill on the Naval Resolution?

LORD G. HAMILTON: Monday.

FLOGGING IN PORTLAND PRISON.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the case that in Portland Prison flogging is sometimes carried on in a room where none are allowed to enter except the prisoner and the whipper; and whether it is the case that prisoners sometimes receive more than the number of lashes that have been awarded to them?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to both paragraphs is in the negative. Corporal punishment at Portland Prison is carried out in a corridor away from the cells, and in the presence of the governor, medical officer, and six discipline officers, besides the two officers who inflict the punishment. The number of lashes or strokes ordered has, I am informed by the Director of Convict Prisons, never been exceeded.

SCOTCH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen): Do the Government expect to take the Scotch Universities Bill before Easter?

Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: It is possible we may be able to take the Second Reading before Easter.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND POOR LAW SCHOOLS.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in reply to an application made to the Local Government Board by the Guardians of the Poor of the parish of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, that the education given in their schools about to be established under the Poor Law should be placed under the Education Department, the Local Government Board informed the Guardians, on 11th July, 1887, that the question whether the assimilation of the Local Government Board's system and the Education Department system would be desirable would probably be considered by the Royal Commission on Education then sitting; and whether, seeing that the Report of the Royal Commission (Final Report, part iv., chapter 4, page 162) is favourable to the inspection of workhouse schools being transferred to the Education Department, Her Majesty's Government contemplate taking any steps towards carrying out this transference?

Mr. C. T. RITCHIE: The scheme of the Shoreditch Guardians was understood by the Local Government Board to be that the Guardians should provide a school which might be regarded as a Public Elementary School, and be subject to all the conditions prescribed by the Code of the Education Department, and that a grant should be made in respect of the school in like manner as in the case of Voluntary Schools and schools provided by School Boards. The Royal Commission on the Education Acts have not made any such recommendation. It is true that the case of workhouse children was, as the Commissioners state incidentally, brought under their attention, and that their Report is favourable to the inspection of workhouse schools by Inspectors of the Education Department instead of Inspectors specially appointed for the purpose by the Local Government Board. I may, however, observe that no witness was called before the Commission to state the views of the Local Government Board on this question, and they do not appear to have had brought before them the fact that the arrangement which they suggest had been previously tried, and that it was discontinued in consequence of difficulties which arose in connection with it, and, further, that a Committee of this House had inquired in 1884 into the subject, and reported that they saw no reason for altering the present responsibility for workhouse schools. I cannot promise that steps will be taken for the transfer of inspection of these schools as suggested.

Mr. STUART: I shall call attention to this matter on the Estimates.

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Copy ordered,

"Of Returns of the Names, Objects or Business, Places where Business is or was conducted, date of Registration, number of Persons who signed the Memorandum of Association, total number of Shares taken up by such Subscribers, nominal Capital, number of Shares into which it is divided, number of Shares taken up, amount of Calls made on each Share, and the total amount of Calls received, of all Joint Stock Companies formed since the 1st day of January 1888 to the 31st day of December 1888, inclusive, distinguishing whether the Companies are Limited or Unlimited, and also the number of Shareholders in each of the said Companies at the date of the last Return, and whether still in operation or being wound up; of the total number having their registered offices in the City of London, or within five miles of the General Post Office;" and, of the total number and the paid up Capital of all registered Companies which are believed to be carrying on business at the present time."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 93.]

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

William Mather, esquire, for South East Lancashire (Gorton Division).

MOTION.

WALTHAM ABBEY GUNPOWDER FACTORY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Brodrick, Bill to exclude unauthorised persons from certain lands to be used for the purposes of the Royal Gunpowder Factory at Waltham Abbey, in the parish of Waltham Holy Cross, in the county of Essex; to regulate the use of a certain footpath thereon; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Secretary Stanhope.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 175.

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION (FOREIGNERS.)

Ordered, That the Committee on Emigration and Immigration (Foreigners) do consist of Nineteen Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir John Colomb, Mr. Cremer, Baron de Rothschild, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Dr. Fox, Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Mr. Kenrick, Mr. Samuel Hoare, Mr. Howorth, Mr. Howard Vincent, Mr. Long, Mr. William Lowther, Sir William Marriott, Mr. Montagu, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. John Talbot, and Dr. Tanner.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.

On the Motion that this Bill be read a third time,

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I do not profess to interpret the Rule with regard to the Third Reading of this Bill, and I will defer, Sir, to your judgment on the matter, but I wish to call attention to the subject of trade trusts and syndicates, and, whether the Rules of the House permit me to bring forward this question or not, there is a popular belief that on any measure which is practically an Appropriation Bill hon. Members have a right to bring forward popular grievances.

MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to be obliged to interrupt the hon. Member, but he is not in order in calling attention to this subject on the Third Reading of this Bill.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read the third time," put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

SUPPLY—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

(1.) £1,785,516, Post Office Telegraphs.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I hope the Postmaster General will be able to give the Committee some explanation with regard to the expense that will be incurred in taking over the Submarine Electric Telegraph Company's system. The charge of £60,000 to be made for taking over this system seems to me to be very large, and I understand that between £30,000 and £40,000 is to be paid in salaries. I have no objection to the taking over of this system; on the contrary, I think it should be taken over by the Government, but at the same time I trust there will be a considerable saving through the proposed amalgamation, and that we are not taking over with the liability to pensioning them, the old and middle-aged servants of the company. There is a large addition to the salary of the office of General Secretary under the Postmaster General. Will he tell us whether the whole establishment of the Telegraph Company has been taken over; and whether it will be subject to future reductions?

MR. PICKERSGILL: I am rather surprised that the Vote should be allowed to pass with so little discussion, for, although this is called a revenue-earning Department, it is a complete misnomer. It may not, perhaps, be known to every Member of this Committee that the Telegraph Service is carried on at an annual loss of at least £350,000. Now that loss is, no doubt, very largely due to the improvident arrangement which was originally made between the State and the Company. The Post Office has acquired a great reputation for business capacity—a reputation which I think, upon the whole, it thoroughly deserves. But it is all the more important on that account that I should call attention to one or two exceptional cases. Now, I want to invite the attention of the Postmaster General to one particular part of the bargain by which we undertake to convey, free of charge, all service messages over the lines which we originally took over. It appears that since these lines were taken over the first complete year was 1871. The number of messages since then has increased to ten times what it was. And, if hon. Members refer to the Report of the Revenue Estimates Committee last year, they will find that the Post Office officials complain very seriously that the railway companies are making an unfair use of this statutory right—that, in fact, they are using the telegraph for purposes in which communication by writing should be the only medium. The annual loss upon this part of the bargain is about £50,000. I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should take very serious steps to come to some arrangement with the railway companies by which this privilege may be commuted for a lump sum, or by an annual payment if it is preferred. Then, Sir, I notice another remarkable statement to which I venture to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman—namely, that there is an annual loss of £200,000 on the conveyance of Press messages. Sir, I am anxious that this subject should be discussed. I do not pretend to say whether this annual loss is justifiable or not, but I certainly think that the principle ought to be raised, and ought to receive some consideration and some discussion in this House. Are we justified in putting upon the public annually a burden of £200,000 for the conveyance of Press messages? No doubt the dissemination——

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I rise, Sir, to a point of order. I wish to ask if this arises upon the Vote now under discussion?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I think the remarks of the hon. Member are in order.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I was raising the point, when I was interrupted, as to whether we were justified in laying this burden of £200,000 on the people? No doubt it is extremely desirable that Press messages should be disseminated throughout the country; but I think, if this Committee were to refuse to grant the money necessary to defray the loss which is now incurred, it would give an opportunity of raising a discussion on the principle. The question is whether we are not now putting this £200,000 into the pockets of the newspaper proprietors of the country. Now, no doubt, newspaper proprietors are a very deserving portion of the community; they discharge an important function in this country; but, after all, they are only one class of capitalists, and it is a question well worthy consideration whether we are justified in carrying on a service at a public loss for the benefit of one class of capitalists, when you are not willing to do the same for every other class. No doubt, the right hon. Gentleman will tell us that the rates for Press messages are fixed by Act of Parliament. But an Act of Parliament is not irrevocable, and should this House consider the present arrangement to be inequitable, it is open to the Postmaster General to introduce a Bill to revise these rates. Now, Sir, there is one other point which I should like to mention. I have here a Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General——

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I must again rise to order, Sir. Last year, your predecessor ruled that the hon. Member for Derby was out of order in raising a similar discussion. We are now asked to vote the salaries, wages, and allowances for the Post Office. That is a separate item from the Telegraphs, and I am anxious, before the Telegraphs are reached, to discuss another point which I think much more important.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I cannot rule that the hon. Member for Bethnal Green is out of Order.

MR. PICKERSGILL: The point I wish to refer to is, that in the periodical stock-taking nothing is done to verify the stores. We know that in connection with the Naval Service very serious loss was sustained owing to the regulations in this connection not having been observed, and I do hope that the right hon. Gentleman will take steps to see that the regulations regarding it in his Department are enforced.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE (St. Pancras, N.): I heartily concur in the remarks of the hon. Member with regard to the loss of £200,000 a-year on Press messages. I think the contract can be broken by the Postmaster General, because the Statute provides that it shall be lawful for the Postmaster General to make contracts from time to time with newspaper publishers and proprietors; and, therefore, it is perfectly in the province of the Postmaster General to issue a fresh scale of charges. I believe newspaper proprietors, who enjoy large incomes from their papers, are able to pay a far larger sum than they now do for telegraphing.

*MR. JOHN E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I think the Committee is much indebted to the two Metropolitan Members who have initiated the discussion. Among the very great variety of subjects which come before the House, I am not sure whether the extreme importance of this particular question has not escaped attention. As is stated in the Report of the Select Committee on Revenue Estimates which sat last year up to the 31st March, 1887, the loss of interest at 3 per cent on the capital account on the purchase of the Telegraphs amounted to £3,024,889, and the deficiency had latterly been increasing year by year, the Return for the year 1887-8 being £471,889. I venture to say that that is a state of things which demands the serious attention of the Committee. I am aware that the last Return received shows that there was considerable improvement for the year ending March, 1888; but I observe that in the Estimates now laid before us there are two very serious increases. How does this deficiency, which amounted to £471,000 for the financial year 1887, arise? Three or four causes have been pointed out—the enormous capital account is responsible for £300,000 annually, Press messages are responsible for a large amount, and railway messages and unprofitable extensions cause the rest. I am not sure that the country would suffer much loss if a large number of these Press messages were not sent at all, especially the London correspondence of certain provincial journals, containing personal gossip and tittle-tattle respecting Members of this House. The Telegraph Department have, under the terms of the Telegraph Act, to transmit railway companies' messages free of cost in return for the use of the lines for their telegraphs; but whereas in the first year the number of such messages transmitted was 97,000, it had last year grown to 960,000. It was given in evidence that whilst there is, on the one hand, a possibility of indefinite increase, on the other there is nothing more contributed for it to the State by the railways. I venture to say that that is a most serious matter, and one which demands a remedy at the hands of the House. The unprofitable character of the Department's work is also partially due to public pressure to improve the service even at a loss, but the Select Committee which considered the subject gave expression to the opinion that the reasons which existed against treating the Post Office as a commercial business were not applicable in the same degree to the Telegraph Department, and I hope the Committee will endorse that policy and consider the Telegraph Department as a commercial concern, since if we are to allow those responsible for it to go on increasing its work unproductively hither and thither meeting, every local demand, we shall soon land ourselves in a Serbonian bog of difficulty. I hope that the Postmaster General will find himself in a position to inform the Committee that the Government will adopt the policy set forth in the Report I have quoted.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I rather hoped that the Postmaster General would have commenced this discussion by making a financial statement with regard to the Telegraph Service, and that he would have explained some of the points which have been alluded to. I believe that the Postmaster General has been in the habit of making such statements, seeing that there are very important financial questions involved. Now the last Return which has been presented to the House with regard to the Revenue Account of the Telegraph Service shows an improvement as compared with the previous Return. In the year ending March, 1887, the deficiency was £145,000; in the year ending March, 1888, it was only £6,800. This is a very great improvement, and I should like to know from the Postmaster General whether it is likely to continue, and whether for the year ending in this month it will show a corresponding improvement as compared with last year? One can hardly expect such a marked improvement as that of last year, because that was due to exceptional causes, but I venture to hope that the revenue of the Telegraph Service will go on improving, for we must now be rapidly approaching the point when, at all events, there will be no deficiency on the Revenue Account. Whether, however, we shall come to a time when there will be a sufficient surplus to pay the full interest on the money invested in the Telegraphs I venture to doubt. I think we may, indeed, confidently expect that such a day is very far distant. Hon. Members should remember that the sixpenny telegrams were forced on the Post Office and on the Government by the House of Commons. I ventured at the time I prepared the scheme and laid it before the Government, and explained it to the House, to inform them that it was highly probable there would never be, in the future, sufficient profits to pay interest on the capital account, and if there should be any surplus it will be much better than I expected. My strong impression was at the time that the scheme which was then adopted was the most moderate from a financial point of view, and it was the most beneficial in the public interest, but I always held that the results were not likely to be such as to give a surplus to represent the interest on capital. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green raised two important points; one with regard to railway messages, and the other as to Press messages. Now, in regard to the former, I cannot but think that there has been a great abuse. It appears that these railway messages have increased ten-fold since 1871, and I cannot for a moment doubt that a large proportion of these messages are not really essential for the railway service, but that the wires are used for other matters. I think the wisest course would be to buy up this interest of the railway companies, and in future charge them for all the work performed; and if the matter could be referred to arbitration, then it would be for the arbitrator to look into the messages and see whether they come within the purview of the Act of Parliament, and whether it was originally intended that such messages should be sent free of charge. I believe it would be found that the messages now sent involve a vast amount of work which was never intended to be provided for. No doubt it would involve an immediate outlay to buy up the interests of the companies, but I think it would be the cheaper in the long run. And now as to the Press messages. I know I have been in considerable doubt as to whether the conclusions of the Committee on that point are right, and as to whether it is a fact that these messages cost the country £200,000 a year. I know it has been stated to be so more than once; but I recollect that when I was at the Post Office I looked carefully into the matter, and I came to the opinion that it was very doubtful whether this could be proved. It is quite true that if the Press messages were sent at the ordinary rate for day messages, a large additional revenue would accrue to the Post Office; but these messages are, for the most part, sent at night, when the wires are not occupied, and I think it is hardly fair to compare the receipts from them with the charges which would be made had they been sent at the ordinary rate for day messages. I am not sure that it would be wise on the part of the Postmaster General to attempt to alter the present arrangement. Undoubtedly, he would meet with very serious opposition from the Press generally. In conclusion, I can only say I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give us some financial explanation of the present position of the Telegraph Service, and what are the immediate prospects of the receipts exceeding the expenditure.

BARON ROTHSCHILD (Bucks, Aylesbury): There is one small point to which I wish to invite the attention of the Postmaster General. Two months ago I questioned him in regard to it, and I pointed out to him that the public were very much in doubt as to whether telegrams, which were sent to places in the country so distant from post offices that mileage had to be paid, should have the mileage paid upon them by the senders, or by the receivers. The Postmaster General, on that occasion, said that the matter had been settled; but I venture to tell him that at this moment telegrams are often sent on which this mileage is often paid, not only by the senders in London, but by the recipients in the country. Personally, I think the better arrangement would be to charge the senders with the mileage, as we know perfectly useless telegrams are sometimes sent promiscuously into the country for the mere object of getting them opened, and they entail unnecessary and unpleasant expense on the receiver. I should like it to be understood in the future that the mileage in these cases is not to be twice paid, but that it must be paid by the sender, and not at the place of destination.

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I only intend to occupy the attention of the Committee for a few minutes in regard to the complaints raised by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green, and I propose especially to deal with the Press messages. When a Select Committee sat on this subject I examined Mr. Patey as to the grounds on which he based his calculation that the Press message cost he country £200,000 annually. He told me it was based on the number of words sent, and it was further explained that though a very large number of the messages were duplicated, yet on the calculation each newspaper was charged as if it were an original message sent to that paper alone. Again, it should be remembered that most of these Press messages are sent at night, and I will venture to assert that £50,000 a year would amply cover any loss arising from Press messages. As to the Telegraph Department generally, I have great satisfaction in saying that it is a model department, and the few reforms needed are being gradually introduced. But I cannot say the same of the Post Office. I believe that if the accounts of the Telegraph Department were drawn out on a commercial basis it would surprise the Committee to learn that the Post Office every year shows a profit. For instance, in the year 1883-84 the profit was 2·97 per cent. Last year it was £500. My object in calling attention to this matter is to show that the Department is being conducted on commercial principles. In the Telegraph Department we have no account of the money expended on buildings, and one of the great stumbling blocks in the way of preparing a business-like statement is that a large debt was incurred in the purchase of the telegraphs. In my opinion it would be wise to follow the example set with regard to the Crimean War Fund, and wipe it off altogether.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to the position of the great railway companies in regard to the Telegraph Service. I maintain that every railway station ought to be a telegraph office. In Northumberland such offices have been established on one of the lines, with great advantage to the public. There appears to me to be no reason why every railway station should not be a receiving-office, even if it could not deliver messages. It would be an enormous advantage to the local police if they could send a telegram from any railway station at any time during the night by paying an extra charge. I would suggest to the Government that when the great railway companies come here with their annual Bills clauses should be inserted making provision in the direction I have indicated.

*MR. W. P. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General whether he has considered the question of night or half-rate messages? The system is commonly in vogue in America, and the proceeds derived from it form a very valuable adjunct to the amount received by the telegraph companies. Of course such a system is not so necessary in a small country like the United Kingdom as it is in the United States; but there are many parts of the kingdom where it would be of great advantage. Take, for instance, the two important towns of Belfast and Liverpool. The mail closes in Belfast at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and any letter posted later than that is not delivered in Liverpool until after 4 o'clock on the following evening. If half-rate messages were allowed between the two towns, I am sure that the telegraphic business between would be greatly increased, and a large revenue would be derived from it. The necessity for the same convenience is, I believe, felt elsewhere. A very large revenue would thus, I believe, be gained by the Post Office if messages were allowed to be sent during the night at half rates. Another matter which has frequently been put before the Postmaster General is that of lowering the rate for messages after a message has reached a certain length. For instance, the charge for transmitting every word over 48 might be reduced to a farthing. In that case I believe a large number of long messages would be sent that are not sent now, and in that way the Post Office would derive an additional revenue.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not entirely agree with the hon. Member who has just sat down. It may be desirable to have night messages, but I do not know why half rates should be charged for them, inasmuch as somebody would have to remain in each office during the night, and an additional charge would thus be imposed upon the Post Office. Nor do I understand why there should be a reduction in the rates upon long messages. I regard it as one of the advantages of the present system that it induces us to cultivate brevity, and no doubt the brevity of the speeches delivered in this House is much increased by the habit when drawing up telegrams of trying to save as many halfpence as possible. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Postmaster General will tell us something about the exact position of the Post Office with regard to telephones. In my opinion it is desirable that the telephone business should be acquired as soon as possible by the Government, and that it should be constituted a branch of the telegraphic service. Owing to the present high charges, very few persons put themselves in general telephonic communication. I should like to see at every telegraph office a telephone, which could be used by any person for one, two, or three minutes at a very small charge. I believe some of the telephonic patents will soon lapse, and I hope that the Post Office will, without recognizing vested interests, acquire the telephonic service for the use of the public.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): I wish to say a word in support of what has been urged by my hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) in regard to the development of the telephone system. Anyone who has seen the working of that system in America must be aware of how backward we are in this country in regard to it. It would be a most useful thing to have telephonic communication between the various post-offices.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I will endeavour as far as I can to answer the various questions which have been put to me, but I would first thank those who have taken part in the discussion for the disposition they have shown not to criticize the Post Office, but rather to show their appreciation of what the Post Office has endeavoured to do to add to the convenience of the public. With regard to the Submarine Telegraph Company, I can assure the Committee that we have not fallen into the mistake made on a previous occasion with regard to the recognition of vested rights which are not compatible with the plainest and most obvious principles of justice. We are not taking over the whole staff, but are making certain exceptions. It has not yet been quite possible to ascertain the amount of the cost to be imposed on the State by the addition of the work of the Submarine Company. We are taking over many of the servants of the Company, and they are to receive the same salaries as they now obtain. As opportunity arises, they will be drafted into different classes of the Postal Service, and will be invited to accept positions in those classes at the recognized rates now paid to the servants of the Crown in those classes. They will then have the prospect of annual increment and pension, but the appointments will be dependent solely upon their capacity to perform the duties attaching to them. In the event of any of them declining to avail themselves of these advantages they will be entitled to remain individually at the service of the Post Office, but at the salaries they now receive, and they will lose the prospect of any increment or pension. I think the Committee will agree that, in taking this course, while we have treated these gentlemen fairly and justly, we have not acted any more liberally than we were bound to do in taking over a service of this importance. I am not in a position to make a statement to the Committee in regard to the precise sum to be paid for the plant and goodwill of the Submarine Telegraph Company. Though we are on the eve of arriving at a settlement, there is yet one nation at all events which desires further information before the ratifications of the Convention are exchanged. I believe the Committee and the country at large will be very well satisfied when they come to know the terms on which we propose to acquire the cable, but that will form the subject of further discussion in this House when the additional Estimates are laid on the Table. Attention has been called to the painful subject of the constantly increasing annual loss on the capital sum laid out in the purchase of the telegraphs. The deficit in 1887 amounted to nearly half a million sterling, but in 1888 it shrunk to £6,000. I am happy to say that a very great improvement is still perceptible, and I am rather more sanguine than is my right hon. Friend and predecessor (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) that the income of the service will eventually clear off the debt. I do not say that the loss of former years is likely to be replaced, but I do say that last year a respectable profit was earned, and I trust that now that the Submarine Telegraph Company is being taken over, the profits will be largely increased. I will give the Committee the figures of the last ten years. In the first five of these a very considerable profit was earned by the Postal Telegraph Service, though it never amounted to such a sum as would quite wipe off the amount put down for interest. In 1879 the profits on working amounted to £280,000; in 1880 they amounted to £296,000; in 1881 to £325,000, (so that the service was then within £1,000 of clearing the interest on the debt); in 1882 to £213,000; and in 1883 to £184,000. In 1884 there was a deficiency of £19,000; in 1885 a deficiency of £32,000; in 1886, a deficit of £45,000; in 1887, a deficit of £145,000; and last year, 1888, a deficit of £6,000, which is the smallest deficit since we have got on the wrong side of the account. I venture to believe that next year will see a substantial sum on the other side of the account. The deficit, which began in 1884, is coincident with the extension of the telegraph service and the increase of telegraph salaries. Although the sixpenny telegrams have been a very great obstacle for some time, I trust that obstacle is now surmounted, and that we are now on our way to earning a profit The deficit of £145,000 in 1887, although due in some degree to the sixpenny telegrams is in a large degree due to extraordinary expenditure in that year, which will not occur in following years. With regard to the loss on railway messages, I agree that there has been a great departure from what must have been the original intention of Parliament. I do not think that Parliament could have contemplated that within 20 years the number of those messages would be multiplied tenfold. I should always be glad to exact a *quid pro quo* from the railway companies by enforcing upon them the necessity of giving greater facilities to the public, and I am quite aware that the private Bills coming before Parliament always afford an opportunity of raising a question of that kind. As to how far the railway companies ought to be made to pay for the facilities given to them by Parliament, I would not like to say. With regard to Press messages, they are very well worthy of the consideration of the Department and of the public. I must demur to the exact phrase of "loss of £200,000 on Press messages." I think that is not the most correct way of referring to that part of the question. There is no doubt that if Press messages were sent at the ordinary rates charged to the public the Department would receive £200,000 a year more; but if the same rates were charged to the Press as to the public many of those messages might never be sent at all, and the Department might not receive anything like £200,000 more than at present. That, no doubt, operated largely on the mind of Parliament and of the Ministers who were responsible for that part of the matter, as well as the question of the public convenience and benefit, quite apart from the personal profits of owners of newspapers which might result from cheap telegraphic rates to newspapers. The hon. Member for Nottinghamshire (Mr. J. E. Ellis) made reference to both those questions, and I am extremely grateful to the hon. Member for calling attention to the recommendation of the Committee that there should be a more strict adherence to commercial principles. I should be extremely obliged to hon. Members if they will assist me in carrying out that recommendation and aid me in resisting applications from those Members who apply for every form of uncommercial arrangement for the benefit of the particular localities they represent. I think it may be sometimes desirable, not so much in the interests of particular localities as in the interests of the general public, to carry out telegraphic works in connection with very distant parts of the Kingdom which are not strictly remunerative. For instance, in some places in the Highlands of Scotland telegrams are very few, and the offices not likely to be self-supporting, but it is absolutely essential to the living of the people that they should have ready means of telegraphing for salt to salt their fish, upon which the existence of some of the natives may be said to depend. I think there are a few cases also where the same thing has been done in the North and West of Ireland. I am quite sure the Committee will not object to such expenditure, which is the exception from what I think is an excellent general rule. There was a point taken by the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire (Baron

F. de Rothschild) with regard to porterage. Undoubtedly the rule is that the sender is responsible for those charges. If the sender is not aware of the exact porterage to be paid, and the office is not aware of it either, it is the duty of the latter to require a deposit, and that rule ought to be strictly enforced. It is quite possible that a sufficient deposit may not have been obtained, and in that case application may be made to the receiver; but I think the whole expense ought to be upon the sender; and if the hon. Member is aware of any cases of hardship and will submit them to me I will consider them. The hon. Baronet the Member for the Lichfield Division (Sir J. Swinburne) has urged the increase of the number of telegraph offices at railway stations. I find that there is some friction on the part of the railway companies, and that they object to their servants acting as servants of the Post Office. It is not desirable to force upon them duties which would interfere with their first duty. It would not, therefore, be easy to increase the number of telegraph stations in this direction. I am at the same time quite willing to consider any case for the establishment of a telegraph office at a railway station where public convenience would be served, and I should be glad to consent to any such proposal where it could be done without unnecessarily infringing on the revenue. The hon. Member for Falkirk (Mr. Sinclair) has brought forward the question of half-rates for night messages. I only wish that I could meet his views. At present a good deal of additional attendance is involved, and the rate at which messages are transmitted is barely remunerative. It is therefore more than doubtful whether the revenue would stand the strain of sending messages at night at half-rates, and I cannot hold out any expectation that such a scheme will be adopted. There exists, however, a plan in London by which telegrams may be sent at night after the offices are closed. If an hon. Member goes from this House at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and wishes to send a telegram he can do so by putting the message on a post card in the pillar box. It will then be delivered by 9 o'clock in the morning. Probably that will meet my hon. Friend's objection. I would remind my hon. Friend when he speaks of the cheap telegrams in America that the American initial rates are very much higher than ours. Where the rate is 2d. or 2½d. a word it is possible to send at half-rate, but I cannot hold out any hope that such a suggestion would be accepted in this country, where the charge is only a halfpenny a word. As it is we barely pay our way. The tendency of messages is to get shorter and not longer. The average amount per message is now distinctly below 8d. It is 7·9; and as the tendency is in that direction it is likely to be still further developed as time goes on. Before the 6d. telegrams were introduced the average was 1s. 1d. per message. I do not think that the state of the revenue of the Department would justify me in holding out any hope with regard to a cheaper rate of telegraphic transmission. As to the telephonic system, which has been referred to by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), the Courts have declared it to be a part of the Government monopoly in telegraphs, and I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Post Office is keeping a watchful eye over the telephones, more with a view to the improvement of the system than with any intention of acquiring them. My predecessor, Mr. Fawcett, unfortunately stated in public that steps would not be taken by the Government to enforce the rights which the Judgment gave them; and a state of things has thereby been created which requires very careful handling, so far as the department is concerned. The patents, however, are likely to lapse very soon, and when they have run out that will be the time to make arrangements, which, I trust, will differ in almost every respect from existing arrangements. With regard to telephones being put into post-offices, that is subsidiary to the larger question. In some parts of England the telephonic system is under the control of the Government absolutely, and there it is, of course, comparatively easy to make arrangements such as have been indicated. So long as the telephone companies continue to ply their trade, it is not desirable, I think, that the Government should commit itself to arrangements which might seem in any way to recognize or establish a vested interest, which I, for one, cannot admit to exist. The grievance of the public in this matter ought, no doubt, to be removed as soon as possible, and it should be done upon terms satisfactory to all parties. I congratulate the Committee upon having taken a step which has been looked forward to for many years by all who have been anxious to extend our telegraphic system—the step of sanctioning the acquisition of the system of the Submarine Telegraph Company, from which I anticipate the most beneficial results alike for the public and for the Department.

MR. LABOUCHERE: When will the acquisition take place?

MR. RAIKES: I think I had better not enter into particulars at present.

MR. PICKERSGILL: There is one matter which the right hon. Gentleman has overlooked. I refer to the paragraph in the Report of the Controller and Auditor General in which he says that no attempt has been made at any detailed stocktaking for many years, and that the regulations laid down for the purpose have not been observed. I hope that matter will receive the attention of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. RAIKES: When an opportunity is afforded to us for stocktaking, I hope to be able to effect a thorough overhauling of every department.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: When the right hon. Gentleman says that the average number of words in a telegraphic message are eight, does that include the addresses? If I recollect rightly, the addresses used to average 12 words; the average number of words in a message was about 25.

MR. RAIKES: I ought to have said that the average charge for each message was 8d., and not that each message averaged eight words.

*SIR J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I may remind my right hon. Friend, who seemed somewhat to complain of the use the railway companies made of the wires, that if his business has increased, that of the railway companies has increased also as regards the forwarding of goods by methods which differ from those formerly adopted, and that in this respect the requirements of the traders are much greater than formerly. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman intended to convey that there is any friction between his department and the railway companies of the Kingdom. It has been my duty to sit on a Railway Committee which has to deal with the Post Office, and I may say that in order to meet the convenience of the public and the Post Office, many trains are now run at earlier hours than they would otherwise be run, and that the profit of the railway companies is made subservient to the interests of the public as far as the Post Office is concerned. As a matter of fact, I do not recollect, in a long series of years, any dispute with the Post Office as to what should be paid for these earlier trains, or at what hours they should be run. The railway companies feel that it is a public services which they are bound to perform in connection with the monopoly they enjoy, and there is very little or no friction whatever in carrying out the wishes of the Post Office.

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE: There is one small point which I desire to mention. A messenger who delivers a telegram should be authorized to wait for five or ten minutes in order to see if there is a return message. This would be an indulgence to persons living in the rural districts who at present find the tariff for porterage almost a prohibitory tariff. At present whether the messenger waits for a reply message depends upon his amiability, which in its turn depends upon a pecuniary *douceur*.

*SIR J. PULESTON (Devonport): I must congratulate my right hon. Friend on the satisfactory results which have attended the establishment of sixpenny telegrams, and which are due largely to the efficient administration of the department over which he presides. When the question of sixpenny telegrams was before the House a great point in the discussion was then propriety of allowing free addresses. The right hon. Gentleman who was then Postmaster General and others did not see their way at that time to give free addresses, but there was a kind of understanding that that would follow when the cost and the expenditure were something like equal.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: No.

*SIR J. PULESTON: That was certainly the general understanding. Every Member of the House recognized the importance of free addresses, and it was understood that they would be given when the cost and the expense reached an equilibrium. I am delighted to find that we have now reached a point when the profits, notwithstanding the additional outlay, are appreciable, and I hope the Postmaster General will be able to give some encouraging assurance that we shall now get free addresses. It is an important point and the only objection that was urged when the matter was discussed before was the financial one.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I am afraid that the coping stone the hon. Member would like to see placed over the telegraphic system is the privilege of sending messages gratis. The address is an integral part of the message, and I think I may say that it formed no part of the plan of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) that there should be free addresses, nor of those who supported my right hon. Friend in his movement for sixpenny telegrams. The objection to free addresses was that unnecessary words were consumed in the addresses. My right hon. Friend told us that upon one occasion he received a telegram in which the address numbered 17 words. One great improvement derived from the introduction of the present system is in the reduction of the number of words in the addresses, and I think it would be a highly retrogressive step to revert to the old system. Any reduction that is made ought to be made in the cost of the whole message and not in any particular part of it. The figures which the Postmaster General has laid before us this evening are, I think, highly satisfactory, and show that the Post Office is conducted on sound commercial principles, while at the same time a due regard is paid to the public interests. The figures, however, are not those which are ordinarily presented in any other commercial undertaking. There is no capital account. The entire capital expenditure is charged against the expenditure of the year, and therefore when you say that you have a balance against the telegraph income you are debiting that income with a large capital outlay for the purpose of developing the business. The capital outlay upon the Post Office and Telegraphs is defrayed out of the income of the year. It is not fair therefore to say that it is only producing so much in the year, because it is really producing the entire capital expenditure of the year, and in addition a small sum beyond with every prospect of its being hereafter increased.

MR. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I wish to put a question in reference to the submarine telegraph. Do I understand that by voting an additional sum now we are committing ourselves to any particular scheme, or that we are actually committed to the purchase? Having regard to the disastrous bargains which we have hitherto made, I think we ought to have an opportunity of discussing the matter before we are committed to the purchase. The right hon. Gentleman says that the matter is still under negotiation, and that he is unable to give us the actual figures. What I wish to know is whether before we are committed to a large expenditure we shall have an opportunity of considering the matter?

MR. RAIKES: A separate Estimate will be presented to the House, and the House will have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it.

*MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I believe that only £41,000 is paid by the Submarine Companies for the use of special wires, and I think that it might be readily increased to £100,000. The Eastern Telegraph Company only pays £6,000, whereas, I think, it could well afford to pay £20,000. Some very important evidence was given by Mr. Patey in regard to these special wires. He was asked if he had any idea of the amount of business done between England and the rest of the world by the Cable Companies, and he answered in the negative. Nor was there any power, he said, to ascertain the business done by these companies. In view of the fact that the Cable Companies pay much larger dividends than the Telegraph Companies, I think that some steps ought to be taken to ascertain what business they do with the view of increasing the sum now paid by them for special wires.

*MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): The right hon. Gentleman says that it is incorrect to speak o a "loss of £200,000 on Press messages.' I gather from his statement that this sum is an unmade profit, which is quite a different thing to a loss. We should like to learn from the Postmaster General what is the actual cost of the messages and the income—to know whether there is a profit or loss?

*Mr. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): With regard to the Post Office Department acquiring the telephones, I should like to ask if the right hon. Gentleman will oppose any application which may be made by the Telephone Company for extension of their patent?

*Mr. de LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I think there is great force in the remarks which were made by my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Cochrane-Baillie). We are supposed, now, to be in the enjoyment of sixpenny telegrams. As far as the towns are concerned, that is really so, but in the rural districts the sixpenny telegram does not exist. You cannot get a telegram for less than a shilling if you live a mile away from the office, and anything over two miles cost 1s. 6d. Now, our letters are conveyed all over the country, whether 100 yards from the post office or 10 miles, at the same charge of a penny. I am quite aware that the Department cannot be called upon to deliver telegrams at the public expense at a cheaper rate than now, but I would suggest that something might be done for the rural districts by a re-arrangement of terms. For instance, where 6d. is charged for porterage, the messenger should be required to wait for at least a quarter of an hour to enable the receiver of the telegram to write a reply. By far the greater number of town telegrams relate to gambling or speculating in some form or another, while those to and from rural districts relate chiefly to agriculture, which at the present moment is a much-suffering industry. Manufacturers can send back their replies without having to employ porters, and it is to be hoped that the Post Office will soon be able to devise a scheme by which town and country may be placed more on an equality with regard to telegraphic facilities. The telegraphs are now much used by the farmers, and the complaint is that more attention is paid to the horse racing and gambling interest than to those of agriculture. The men on the Stock Exchange get their telegrams for sixpence, while the farmers have to pay double. I trust that my right hon. Friend may be able to give the Committee an assurance that this matter will receive due consideration.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's County, Birr): I rise for the purpose of supporting the statement which has been made by the hon. Member for Devonport (Sir J. Puleston). The hon. Member has said that when the subject of the sixpenny telegrams was before the House a demand was made for the inclusion of the addresses. That demand was not conceded, but it was understood that as soon as it was shown that sixpenny telegrams were a financial success the inclusion of addresses should be considered. The right hon. Member for Wolverhampton says there was no such understanding.

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Not on the part of the late Government.

Mr. MOLLOY: It was distinctly understood that as soon as the sixpenny telegrams proved a financial success, as they have now proved to be, the addresses should be sent free. I recollect that both the hon. Member for Devonport and myself spoke upon the subject, and the statement of the then Postmaster General was that it would be better to see what the result of sixpenny telegrams would be financially before we went further. We had a long fight about these sixpenny telegrams, and the prophecy then made has now been fulfilled. Therefore I think the time has now arrived when the inclusion of free addresses should at any rate be considered. The fact that the right hon. Member for Bradford once received a telegram in which the address comprised 17 words is of no importance at all; it is very improbable that a person sending a message to the Postmaster General would say "The Right Hon. John Joseph Jones, Her Majesty's Postmaster General," and so on. The cheaper telegrams are made, the more will the telegraphs be used, and the better it will be for the commercial prosperity of the country. I believe that, on the average, five words cover addresses; and therefore, notwithstanding the opposition of the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton, I trust that the Government will concede the boon now asked for.

*Sir ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton has taken exception to the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Devonport on the ground that free addresses would encourage an unnecessary and extravagant diffuseness of language; but surely any concession in this direction would naturally take the form of allowing a certain number of words—say four or five—to pass free, provided these words formed the address. I can conceive no reasonable objection to such a concession, and it really amounts, in one point of view, to a reduction in the general price of telegrams. It is not a very large concession for the Post Office to make, and would not entail a heavy charge upon the revenue of the Department. It would simply increase the number of words sent for 6d. from 12 to 16 or 17, because, as a rule, four or five words of each telegram consists of addresses. I hope that my right hon. Friend, if not now, will at some early period see his way to make this concession.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): While we have no right to expect that the Department should be carried on at a loss, I think we might well insist that as soon as sixpenny messages realize a profit free addresses should be wholly or partially included. I believe that that was the understanding when the system of sixpenny telegrams was established.

*Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Before the telegraphs passed into the hands of the Government longer messages than at present could be sent for sixpence within the Metropolis. When the Government took over the telegraphs the rate was at once doubled. I hope that at no distant time the experiment will be tried of including addresses in the charge. We were told, when sixpenny telegrams were first proposed, that the system would involve a terrible loss to the Revenue, and the right hon. Gentleman, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, said it was impossible to carry it out with success. They have now been in operation for some years, and the experiment has proved to be successful, and I think the time has now arrived when it would be wise on the part of the Government to concede free addresses. It would not entail any considerable additional cost upon the Post Office, and would, undoubtedly, be of great advantage to the public generally.

*Sir J. PULESTON: I should be willing to acquiesce in the restriction to five words for the address, if we can induce the right hon. Gentleman to accept that as an instalment, and I believe there was an understanding, though not, perhaps, a bargain, with the right hon. Member for Bradford, that the inclusion of addresses should be considered as soon as a financial equilibrium was established. I do not think we should regard the Post Office revenue as a source of profit only, where the general interests of the country are concerned.

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I feel bound to confirm the statement of my right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, that, at the time sixpenny telegrams were adopted, there was no understanding whatever come to at the time that there was to be a return to free addresses; and the difficulty chiefly put forward was not the financial one, but it was the large number of words used unnecessarily in addresses when addresses were free. It was found that the average number of words for the names and addresses of sender and sendee was 13.

*Sir J. PULESTON: I think the average number was nine.

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: No; 13, and the surplusage involved a large loss in transmission, which was saved by abolishing free addresses. I believe that now the average number of words required for names and addresses has been reduced to something like four. This shows a saving, both to the public and to the Department, in the cost of transmitting four words, as against 13. I believe the Postmaster General would do a very unwise thing if he were to revert to the old system of free addresses. It cannot be done without greatly increasing the cost, and if any additional advantage is to be given to the public, it should be given in another direction.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I think the country is to be congratulated on having acquired the Channel cables, and on making the service a public one for the country, instead of being in the hands of a company. I hope there will be an early reduction in the rates now charged for telegrams by the monopolist companies. Although I believe that the Postmaster General is inclined to do his best for the public, we all know that enormous pressure has been put upon him by *quasi*-vested interests. I trust that the adjustment and absorption of the submarine cable will lead to a considerable reduction of expenditure as well as an improved service. So far as the newspaper telegrams are concerned, for my part, I am very willing that the country should submit to a very cheap rate in that respect; but I think that some supervision should be exercised over the telegrams themselves, in order to see that the news is really of interest to the public, or that the money is not expended on messages about pugilism, royalties, and subjects of that kind. As to telephones, there is a very convenient service in Switzerland, and I do not see why we should not possess similar advantages. With regard to the House itself, it is most inconvenient to have to go beyond the Outer Lobby in order to despatch a telegram. The journey is not only long, but also dangerous, because hon. Members are liable to fall into the hands of strangers. I trust that something will be done for the convenience of the House in this respect.

Mr. RAIKES: I am afraid that I cannot hold out any hope of adopting free addresses. The estimated cost of reverting to free addresses is not less than £400,000 a-year, and he would be a bold Minister indeed who would hold out a prospect of incurring such a loss in restoring the old system. My hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury wishes us to institute a roving Commission to ascertain how the Transatlantic and other submarine cable companies transact their business. I do not see how such an inquiry could be prosecuted, as we have no right to overhaul the books of those companies or to go to Foreign Powers in order to ascertain what their arrangements are with these companies. Therefore, I can hold out no hope of such an inquiry being instituted. The hon. Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) has made a suggestion which I will mention in order to correct a mistake into which some hon. Members have fallen. There is no intention on the part of the Government to acquire the telephones by purchase. I may, in conclusion, take this opportunity of referring to the grievous loss the Telegraph Department has just sustained in the death of Mr. Patey, who was a most competent public servant. His loss is deeply felt, and his memory is endeared to all who had the advantage of serving under him.

*Sir J. SWINBURNE: If all of the small railway stations were made telegraph offices, I think that would do away with the difficulty in regard to porterage in the rural districts.

*Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: I desire to know whether the Postmaster General is satisfied with the amount which the cable companies pay to the Government for the use of the wires? That amount is, I maintain, very much less than it ought to be.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I should like to recall the attention of the Postmaster General to a matter I referred to at the end of last Session—namely, the case of a postmaster in a country town who has been elected Mayor of that town. I should like to know how this public functionary can fulfil his duties to the municipality—attending meetings of the Town Council, meetings of Committees, and so on—and at the same time discharge his duty as postmaster? I also understand that this person is agent for the Sun Insurance Company, and I wish to know whether it is permissible, under the Post Office Regulations, for a postmaster to occupy, with matters of this kind, the time he should be devoting to the service of the Post Office?

The CHAIRMAN: The subject the hon. Member is raising is not relevant to this Vote.

*Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: If I do not receive a reply on the subject of the charges to the cable companies, I shall feel obliged to move a reduction of the Vote. These Companies are paying £41,000 a-year to the Government for the use of their wires, which I submit is not nearly enough. One of the companies is only paying £6,000, whereas it should be paying £20,000. No steps, I believe, are being taken to ascertain the amount of business that the companies do, which, I think, is a great mistake.

Mr. RAIKES: If the hon. Member wishes the Government to make an inquiry into the matter in order to ascertain the amount of profit earned by the Cable Company, I must repeat what I have already stated—namely, that the subject is not a proper one for

Government investigation. When we put up a wire for a company we make a charge sufficient to yield a fair profit and cover the cost of repairs, and that is all the answer which I can give the hon. Member. As to the amount of money which the people who use the wires make under the arrangement, that is a matter which lies wholly outside the consideration of the Government.

Vote agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS I.

(2.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £78,395, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1890, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I desire to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000 in respect of the expenditure on Richmond Park. In round numbers the amount expended on this park is, I think, £4,600 per annum. Well, looking at the cost of police and the probable cost of mending the roads—which cannot be very much, considering the small amount of traffic—there must be something like £3,000 spent on the trees and grass in the park. We on this side of the House, as a rule, are not able to have great parks of our own; but I appeal to the landed interest on the other side. I ask whether, if an hon. Member had a park of 2,000 or 3,000 acres, the roads being maintained, he would think of expending £3,000 a year on it? Yet that is what is done in the case of Richmond Park. How the money is spent or squandered I have no clear idea. There are some calves in the park—some with horns and some without—and we are told that they cost a great deal of money, but I doubt whether, in private deer parks, owners dream of spending as much as £3,000 a year because of these animals. I think that this Vote is excessive, and that in moving this reduction I am altogether within the mark. I am certain that Richmond Park could be well maintained for £2,000 a year.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £77,395, be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

MR. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I should like to ask to ask why it is that we have the charge for park-keepers and gatekeepers lumped together, instead of being given separately, in the Estimates, and also I should like to ask for an explanation of the increase under this head?

*__THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS__ (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): It would not be reasonable for me to go through all the items of expenditure in connection with the maintenance of this park; but I can assure the hon. Member for Northampton that the Government have been doing what they can, especially in recent years, to reduce the expenditure for Richmond Park, as well as for the other parks. It is, however, impossible that we can have such a handsome park as that at Richmond maintained as cheaply as an ordinary private park. In answer to the remarks of the hon. Member for Poplar, I may explain that the increased expense this year for park-keepers and gatekeepers is due to the fact that we have had to make some provision for the superannuation of constables who, under the new arrangement as to St. James's and the Green Parks, will no longer be in our service. There will, however, be an ultimate saving of expense when the arrangement is completed, and police duty will be performed by the keepers in conjunction with their ordinary work.

MR. S. BUXTON: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question. I desire to know why this item for keepers is put down in a lump sum?

*__MR. PLUNKET__: I am afraid I can give no further explanation.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has given a reasonable answer to my criticism. The right hon. Gentleman says we cannot expect to keep up a public park as cheaply as a private park. I do not ask him to keep up Richmond Park as cheaply, but what I say is that the owner of a private park would make some profit out of his property by grazing, and, granting that we do not attempt to make a profit in that way, surely £2,000 is enough to be out of pocket. I trust the right hon. Gentleman will give me some explanation of the matter, for the public outside take a strong view of these matters, and may suspect that the part of this money goes into the pocket of somebody or other. I see we have a bailiff of the Royal Parks who has to look after all the Royal Parks for £700 a-year; we have a Ranger, a Superintendent at a salary of £346, and an Assistant Superintendent at £150 per annum. There is, besides this, a large sum paid to gamekeepers —though I do not find them in the Estimates. I protested against the payment for gamekeepers over and over again, and at last the item disappeared, but the individuals did not—they remained. They do very much the same thing, but they are not called "gamekeepers." This shows how necessary it is to look into these matters. I should like to ask how many persons "make a good thing" out of Richmond Park? There are a considerable number of houses there granted by Her Majesty, and there are gardens round those houses. I should like to know if the gardeners who attend to these gardens are paid out of this Vote?

*MR. PLUNKET was understood to deny the justice of the personal imputations suggested in the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton, and to say that it would take two or three days to give the hon. Member the information he asked for.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I must take exception to the air of innocence assumed by the right hon. Gentleman. He says it would take three days to give the hon. Member for Northampton the information he asks for. Well, I contend that, even if it took three weeks to give it, the right hon. Gentleman's duty is to offer that information. I desire to know—and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can find time to answer this—who are the Rangers and Deputy Rangers we see put down in this Vote? Is the Ranger a Royal personage—is he a pluralist—and what work does he do for his pay? I am told that the Ranger of Green Park is a Royal personage, but I have never seen him looking after the gatekeepers and turncocks there. If I do not get any information on this point I shall move to report Progress.

*MR. PLUNKET: The Ranger—as the hon. Member himself must know—is His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.

MR. CONYBEARE: I did not know anything of the sort.

*MR. PLUNKET: The Ranger has a considerable authority over the parks, and I have often derived advantage from his advice and co-operation.

MR. CONYBEARE: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the useful piece of information he has given. I may remark that I am not in the habit of putting questions to waste the time of the Committee—I put questions to elicit information, as I have a right to do. How on earth am I to know the various offices of these Royal Dukes and hangers-on? With regard to the Ranger of these parks, I must say it seems to me that the Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Forces ought to have enough to do in connection with his military duties without having to occupy his time with these pettifogging duties in connection with the parks.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 75; Noes 144.—(Div. List, No. 48.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith): I wish to call attention to the question of Constitution Hill—a subject which was discussed the other day in connection with another matter. I take this the earliest opportunity of again raising the subject. I observe that a number of Members base their opposition to Constitution Hill being closed except to privileged persons on the ground that they are not included in the list, but I am disposed to think that if the Members of this House were admitted to the privilege, the chances of the public claim to use the road being fairly considered would be in no degree augmented. I think this drive should be open on the ground of public convenience. Constitution Hill forms a direct line between important districts of the Metropolis—for example, from this House to Hyde Park Corner. In the same way as the drive across the Horse Guards Parade, now opened to the public, is a great public convenience, so would the benefit of opening Constitution Hill be felt. Now we have to take a detour by St. James's and Piccadilly, or go round by that huge enclosure, Buckingham Palace Gardens. One point raised in this discussion is the privacy of Buckingham Palace Gardens. I do not know that there is anyone in Buckingham Palace for whom privacy is required. Of course, any time Her Majesty is at the Palace it would be perfectly simple to have the road closed. But even now the whole front of the Palace is used for vehicular traffic, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman himself would admit that the privacy of the Palace is already secured as far as it may be by the enclosure of Buckingham Palace Gardens. I think another reason for supporting the opening of the Hill is that the list is an absurd relic of privilege which ought to be abolished. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That £78,295 be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Munro Ferguson.*)

*MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I rise with the utmost pleasure to support the proposition of my hon. Friend. It seems to me so reasonable and moderate that it ought to command the attention of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Plunket). But if for some official reason the right hon. Gentleman is unable to give it his independent consideration, I think it might well claim the support of Members opposite. Members of Parliament had formerly the exclusive privilege of driving in cabs to the House of Commons through Storey's Gate. That privilege is now taken away from them, and shared by the general public. And in regard to Richmond Park, it was stated in a previous debate that formerly the Ranger would only allow carriages to pass round the Park. No one on this side holds, and I do not believe hon. Members opposite would hold, that only carriages should be permitted in these places. But on Constitution Hill not only are carriages the only vehicles allowed, but absolutely not everybody's carriage—only the carriages of a small minority of ladies and gentlemen who have that especial privilege, which is called the *entrée.* What we ask Her Majesty's Government to do is to open the roadway, and to relieve the congested districts on either side of the Park. The right hon. Gentleman knows that it has often been suggested that a road should be made from the North of London down to the Thames in order to relieve the crowded traffic of Bond Street and St. James's Street. All who live in that part of London know how inconvenient it is at times. All we ask the right hon. Gentleman to do is to open a roadway which is paid for and maintained by the taxpayer, and not reserve it to the use of a small minority of ladies and gentlemen who, I believe, pay their taxes, although I am not certain whether they do so in all cases. I ask Her Majesty's Government to consider this subject on the grounds that the roadway is maintained by the taxpayer, that to open it would be to relieve a congested district, and that it would abolish an absurd system of privilege which is now completely out of date.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: This subject has already been discussed once this Session, and I think there will be no desire to discuss it at any length. I will make a suggestion which might remedy the inconvenience complained of. It would be, no doubt, an enormous convenience to the public to have a short cut from Hyde Park Corner to Buckingham Gate. It would be a great relief to the traffic. But I have always felt in regard to Constitution Hill that it is a narrow roadway with trees on either side. If the road were opened to the public, it would be necessary to cut down the trees on one side, and for my part I would have very great hesitation in doing that. It is one of the most beautiful walks in London, and it would be a very serious detriment to the Park if we were to cut down the trees. I have often thought that a new road might be made from the bottom of Hamilton Place to Buckingham Gate. There is already a broad walk there which lies for the first half of the distance in a kind of dell, and is well adapted for a b road road. If that were done, it would avoid the necessity of cutting down the trees on Constitution Hill. The difficulty would be solved, and a new road would be opened for traffic, while Constitution Hill could be reserved solely to the use of Her Majesty, and the existing privilege extended to a certain number of people would thus be abolished. I throw out the suggestion to the right hon. Gentleman. It is one which has often occurred to me, and one which, had I been longer in the position which he now occupies, I had thought of submitting to the House. At any rate, I think it is a better mode of dealing with the case than that of cutting down the trees on Constitution Hill.

*Mr. PLUNKET: Any suggestion coming from the right hon. Gentleman, who has previously filled the office I now have the honour to hold, will, of course, be received by me with the greatest possible consideration; but, as this suggestion comes now before me for the first time, I cannot at present express any opinion upon it. Constitution Hill has always been regarded as Her Majesty's private drive in connection with Buckingham Palace. I admit that there is a certain amount of inconvenience in this arrangement to a certain portion of the people; but Constitution Hill is open for all the purposes of foot passengers, and it is only those who drive in carriages or cabs who will be favoured if the proposal of the hon. Gentleman were adopted. The suggestion, however, is one that does not affect the public generally; and it is not probable that those from whom it really emanates would be glad to see omnibuses admitted as well as cabs.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!

*Mr. PLUNKET: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman would also like to see tram-cars there?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Hear, hear!

*Mr. PLUNKET: Well, I confess that I am unable to take that view. The hon. Gentleman who moved the reduction of the Vote spoke of our closing Constitution Hill.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON: I think I used the words "partial closing."

*Mr. PLUNKET: The word I objected to was "closing." Instead of closing or partially closing the Royal Parks, we have done all we can to render them more accessible to the public; and I will only now repeat that I will consider the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman opposite.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The right hon. Gentleman says I am in favour of omnibuses and cabs going up Constitution Hill, and so I am, while, personally, I should not have the slightest objection to tram-cars. Does the right hon. Gentleman know that omnibuses and cabs are not excluded from the Green Park and the Mall, while they are only excluded from a portion of Hyde Park on the ground that so many private carriages go there to make a sort of spectacular show for we poor foot-passengers who go to look at them. I cannot see why the cab which starts from Marlborough House and goes along the Mall, and might go through Buckingham Gate, passing right under the windows of the Palace, should not be allowed to turn up Constitution Hill. The right hon. Gentleman says Constitution Hill ought not to be opened because it has never been closed.

*Mr. PLUNKET: No.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Well, that is how it appeared to me; and I say there is no reason why it should not be opened, and I have never, although I have often heard the matter discussed in this House, heard a single good reason urged against that proposal. Here, in the centre of London, is a large space, having on one side a park and on the other a large garden, between which runs a road which is precisely the road required for the use of the public. I am convinced that if hon. Gentlemen vote for this proposal in sufficient numbers, Her Majesty will most readily grant the boon to Her subjects. I do not think, however, that Her Majesty's Ministers have been quite candid on the subject; on the contrary, I think they have mis-stated the strong feeling which exists on the part of the people upon the subject; and I think we ought to convey that feeling in the vote we are about to give on this question. I may say that I think the counter-proposal of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) is a most astounding one. He says, "Let us leave this road sacred to Royalty, and have a new one." This road is maintained at the public cost, and he wishes it to be left only for the use of Members on the Royal Family. But there are the Privy Councillors also, and are they to excluded? And what about those Elysian Fields that are now considered sacred to nursemaids and children? Why should the road be kept for the exclusive use of the Queen? I am sure Her Majesty is not in the least anxious to have a road sacred to her. The reason why the public are not permitted to drive along Constitution Hill is not on account of any objection on the part of Her Majesty, but because a few persons like the swagger of being able to drive along it while the public are obliged to walk. That is the reason why Constitution Hill is to be kept shut from general vehicular traffic. You, Mr. Courtney, will remember very well what happened in the Reign of George III. You will remember that an Irish gentleman asked Mr. Pitt for the privilege of driving along Constitution Hill, but Mr. Pitt said—"I cannot give you that; but as you have been a faithful servant of the public and voted for everything I wanted, I will make you an Irish Peer." That is the sort of privilege this exclusiveness has been considered. The road is not to be kept open for the benefit of the public, but in favour of a few privileged Brahmins who want to drive along it, to the exclusion of everybody else. I do hope we shall, by the vote that will be given on this question, show that there are a considerable number of Members of this House who think it can do no harm to allow the public the use of a road which is maintained at considerable public expense.

MR. G. A. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Cumberland, Whitehaven): Although I do not remember the time of George III., I do remember the discussion about throwing open the road between Marlborough House and Storey's Gate, and that I took some part in bringing about the result. That proposal was grounded upon the fact that it could not interfere with the privileges of the Royal Family. In the same way I do not see that the user of Constitution Hill would by any means interfere with the privileges of the Royal Family; and therefore, as I understand the reduction of the Vote is moved in order to obtain the sense of the Committee on that proposal, I shall think it my duty to follow the hon. Member into the Lobby. Well, Sir, I also at that time proposed that a roadway should be made across St. James's Park Ornamental Water. The proposal did not find favour at the time either with the authorities or with the House of Commons. But I rise to point out to the right hon. Gentleman that the user to a moderate extent of Constitution Hill can by no means interfere with the enjoyment of it by Royalty; and therefore I shall feel it my duty to follow the hon. Member into the Lobby. With regard to the suggestion to open a road from Hamilton Place across the Green Park, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford has already made such a wilderness of that part of London, and his attempts to make Hyde Park Corner an ornamental part of the Metropolis are such a conspicuous failure, not only by the removal of the Arch, sinking it down into a place where it was never intended to stand, but turning it sideways to the main road, where it is an object of ridicule, and also by placing in the open space an absurd statue, that I look with great suspicion on any proposal coming from the same quarter.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Shall I be in order in drawing attention on this Vote to inclosures in Greenwich Park?

*THE CHAIRMAN: Not until the Question before the Committee is disposed of.

*MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I shall support this Motion, not only for reasons more or less the same as those of my right hon. Friend, but also because I have a further and ulterior object in view—namely, the opening up of the Mall to Trafalgar Square and so relieving the present congestion of traffic from the West by Piccadilly. There is really no difficulty in opening Constitution Hill. The road is a good width already, and if the footpath on the left side going downwards from the Archway were thrown into the road, it would be about as wide as the Strand is in some places. This would entail the loss of not more than 4 or 5 trees. The further end of the Mall is now of no use to anybody, but if cut through Spring Gardens into Trafalgar Square, the great open Boulevard connecting Kensington and Knightsbridge with the Strand and the Embankment would be one of the finest in Europe, not to speak of the relief to traffic in Piccadilly and the convenience of Members of Parliament living in Kensington and Knightsbridge.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: My alternative proposal was made under the idea that if Constitution Hill were opened up, it would be necessary to widen it, and in order to do so a number of trees would have to be cut down, which would be a great misfortune. It was only in that view that I made the suggestion, and if it should turn out that I am mistaken, I will gladly advocate the opening o Constitution Hill.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 78; Noes 80.—(Div. List, No. 49).

Original Question again proposed.

MR. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): It seems to me to be unfair to the country constituencies that they should be called upon to pay a large sum for the Parks and Pleasure Grounds of London. Here, in this Estimate, is a sum of £2,305 for Richmond Park, of £2,232 for Greenwich Park, of £10,060 for Regent's Park, of £33,828 for St. James's, the Green, and Hyde Parks, £2,883 for Bushey Park, and £937 for Hampton Court Park. I especially omit all mention of Kew Gardens, because from that place other parts of the country may be supposed to derive some benefit, seeing that Kew is an experimental station. But with regard to the other parks, it must be remembered that London is the richest place in the world, and I maintain that Londoners ought to pay for their own parks, because, although they are called Royal parks, they are really nothing else than pleasure grounds for the benefit of the people of London, and; therefore, they should be maintained solely by Londoners. London can well afford to do that; if it wants money it is only needful to put a tax on ground landlords, and you will get plenty. The Vote altogether is £90,000, and I protest that this is a great deal too large a sum for people in distant parts of the country to be called upon to pay for the benefit of rich Londoners. I therefore move the reduction of the Vote by £52,244.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That £26,155 be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Philipps.*)

*MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I cannot support the Amendment. If Londoners are to have those parks under their own control, no doubt they will be well satisfied to pay for them. But the people of London have scarcely what can be called even a part proprietary right in them; they have only the right to walk in them, just as people coming to London from other parts of the country have. Those parks are, to all intents and purposes, national parks, and not London parks. They are merely London parks because they happen to be situated in the Metropolis.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I am astonished at my hon. Friend talking of these as national parks. On his principle every park in every large city in the three kingdoms is a national park in the same sense. I think the time has come when the expense of maintaining the parks ought to be borne by the people of London, which, through its County Council, has control of its own affairs. You must remember that when any unfortunate provincial comes to London he leaves a great deal with the lodging-house keepers, and thus enables them to pay their rates. The people in the country ought not to be called upon to maintain parks for the benefit of the wealthy people of London. It is all very well to say that the Government make a grant towards the maintenance of the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh. But, after all, it is only a miserable Vote, and you are doing your best to take it away from us.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 52; Noes 100.—(Div. List, No. 50.)

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I am sorry to intervene at this stage of the proceedings, and I only do so because I feel it incumbent upon me to move the reduction of the Vote by £500. I make this Motion as a protest against the conduct of the Government in depriving the people of London of the right of meeting in St. James's Park. The people of London are compelled, in common with the rest of their countrymen, to maintain the Park. The Government have absolutely prohibited the people from meeting in Trafalgar Square, and six or eight months ago I pointed out to the First Commissioner of Works and the Home Secretary that there was a capital alternative site, that site being the Horse Guards' Parade. The Home Secretary promised to take the question into his consideration, and after four months' deliberation he announced to the House that the Government had come to the conclusion that the people ought not to be permitted to meet at that place. I think it is one of the very best sites in London for meeting purposes. It is exceedingly quiet, the spot belongs to the people, there are no privileged classes so far as I am aware who have any more right to it than we have, and yet we are shut out from it. Even the

Home Secretary admits that the people ought to have some place of meeting. It is impossible for us to raise £100, £150, or £200 with which to pay for halls in which to meet and express our differences with various Governments, or to ventilate our grievances, real or imaginary, and no matter what Government is in office the people will always have something to say in regard to the doings of the Government. It will be exceedingly dangerous, and, I believe, the Home Secretary practically admitted this view of the matter, to attempt to prevent the people from meeting to ventilate their grievances The Horse Guards Parade is a centre place upon which the people from the east, west, north, and south could converge; a gathering of people there would not interfere with the comfort or convenience of any inhabitants, neither will the traffic of the Metropolis be interfered with. I beg to move that the Vote be reduced by £500.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That '£77,895' be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

Attention called to the number of Members present. Committee counted, and 40 Members found in their places.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): It is a very important subject the hon. Member for Haggerston has raised, and I hope he will take the sense of the Committee on his Motion for the purpose of placing before the citizens of London the necessity of making use of this open space, the Horse Guards Parade, now that the Government have driven us from our accustomed place of meeting. What single substantial objection is there against this use of the Parade? For the greater part of every day the space is unoccupied. There are military meetings there sometimes, and I have myself taken part in meetings of Volunteers on the Parade. Why draw a distinction and refuse to allow citizens in their everyday dress to meet and discuss public questions, where you allow these same citizens to meet in uniform, and go through a number of military evolutions? I heartily support the proposal, though I do not for a moment waive our claim to meet in Trafalgar Square. There are many places where we are entitled to meet, but I do not wish to go into the general question. There can be no quibbling objection to this Parade as a place of meeting; it is admirably situated from its position, and for the greater part of the day it is deserted. I really do not understand what objection there can be, unless the Government mean to wage war against the right of free public meeting everywhere.

*SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): As a Metropolitan Member I am not disposed to complain of the hon. Member for the Camborne Division for interposing in the discussion of a question that is really of Metropolitan interest, because I am one of those who consider that Metropolitan interests should be regarded as of Imperial interest, and that because they are Metropolitan, and I think Imperial taxation should bear a fair charge for the cost of such interests. But I do venture to protest, as a Metropolitan Member, and as representing a large, quiet, and orderly portion of the citizens of London, against the hon. Member coming down to the House and endeavouring to open a scene for riot and disorder in the midst of the Metropolis. I am one of the last who would wish, in any way, to curtail any of the facilities that exist for the largest public meetings. I have myself used those facilities largely in the past, and I hope frequently to use them in the future; but I do say that the broad expanse of Hyde Park lends itself admirably to every possible legitimate occasion for public meeting. ["No!"] An hon. Member denies that; but I say it is impossible to conceive of any public meeting so large, or any number of meetings so extensive, that Hyde Park would not offer sufficient space. As to convenience of situation, why, there is but the difference of five minutes' walk between Hyde Park and the Horse Guards Parade; and it is idle to pretend that in point of position one is more convenient than the other. The hon. Member for Haggerston told us that the spot belongs to the people, and therefore he claims it for the use of the people, and that they have the right to meet there. Yes, Sir, it belongs to the people, and for that reason I claim it should be retained for the use of the people and not handed over to a noisy band of agitators. I would deny these the right to come into such places, and still more would I deny the right of those criminal classes who do—it must be admitted very commonly—follow in the wake of such demonstrations.

An hon. MEMBER: And of Lord Mayors' Shows.

*SIR ROPER LETHBRIDGE: Yes, but there is no proposition to open the Horse Guards' Parade to the Civic Procession. The hon. Member for Haggerston told us it was a quiet spot, and so it is, and so it should be, for not only is it situated in close proximity to the Royal Palaces and close to Government offices, it is very near where the Imperial Parliament holds its Sittings; and, therefore, I think there is every reason to retain it in its quietude and not run the risk of disorder and disturbance so near the House.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): I did not quite understand whether you put the reduction generally on the Vote. Am I at liberty to raise the question of enclosures in the parks?

THE CHAIRMAN: No, the hon. Member is premature.

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I think it will be felt, especially after the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet and of the hon. Member for North Kensington, that a reply from the Chief Commissioner of Works would tend to shorten discussion. It struck me the hon. Member moved the Amendment in a clear and temperate manner, and unless it can be shown that his proposition is unreasonable I shall support him.

*MR. PLUNKET: I quite understood the hon. Member to say it was his intention to take a Division as marking his protest. He admitted, I think, that this matter was fully debated when the whole subject of open air public meetings in the Metropolis was thoroughly discussed earlier in the Session.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): The right hon. Gentleman is under some slight misapprehension. I did not say the question I had raised was fairly discussed when the Speech from the Throne was before the House. I said that the question of Royal Parks had been fairly discussed this evening. I may be permitted to say, in reply to the hon. Member for North Kensington, that if he had to tramp from Limehouse to Hyde Park, as many people have in order to take part in popular demonstrations, he would appreciate the distance of the Parade from Hyde Park. The two places are 20 minutes walk apart, and the walk there and back, 40 minutes, make a sensible difference to a man who has walked from the far East of London. I think we ought to have the support of those who boast themselves Constitutionalists, if they are anxious to maintain the right of free speech in open spaces. Surely it is better to allow the people to come together, to blow off superfluous steam, and ventilate their grievances, than to sit on the safety valve until an explosion takes place.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): We have heard no reason why meetings should not take place on the Parade. One advantage would be, there is no damage to be done. All demonstrations in Hyde Park are, to a certain extent, harmful to the Park. The grass is trampled down and in danger of being destroyed—an open space without turf is drier and not open to the same objection. This place is the more necessary for public meetings, seeing that you have taken away the right the people enjoyed for 40 years to meet in Trafalgar Square. The remarks of the hon. Member for North Kensington would apply equally to meetings in Hyde Park, or anywhere else. But poor people cannot afford to organize a big meeting in a public hall —50 guineas for a night in St. James's Hall is something considerable to them. Indeed, in the Metropolis it is very difficult to get a hall for a popular meeting. Exeter Hall is taken away for other purposes; in fact, we are boycotted all round. It is very difficult to get a large hall for a popular Radical meeting. Proprietors are usually Conservative, and do not like their premises used by people who may raise inconvenient questions that might lose a Member—such as the hon. Member for Kensington, for instance—his seat at the next election. We require public meetings to discuss public matters, no matter whether the Government is Liberal or Conservative; indeed, I think I have assisted in the organization of more demonstrations against Liberal Governments than Conservative Governments. We require sometimes to keep a Liberal Government straight, and we have to protest sometimes against some Conservative Jingo policy against the national interest. But if you are going to deny us the use of all open grounds, where would you have us hold our meetings? We do not wish to have disorder; we wish to have matters settled quietly. Let the County Council, or some other authority, exercise control over the terms and conditions under which meetings shall be held. Your present policy of objection and doing nothing causes deep irritation.

MR. FIRTH (Dundee): The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works makes no reply; let me put the question to him in a direct form. On what ground do the Government claim the right, or assert the wisdom, of excluding the people of London from the Horse Guards Parade? The observations of the hon. Gentleman opposite, my former opponent (Sir R. Lethbridge) about riot and agitators and the criminal classes are in the usual line, and will not, I think, be adopted by the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): The hon. Gentleman asks by what authority Her Majesty's Government prevent Her Majesty's subjects from holding meeting on the Horse Guards Parade———

MR. FIRTH: No; the right hon. Gentleman mistakes me entirely. I did not say by what authority. I know they have authority. I ask, why? What is the reason for the exclusion?

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: At any rate, I may say, having taken part years ago in passing the Parks Regulation Act through the House, that there was a very strong feeling in the House of Commons at that time that the assemblage of a large number of people in the public parks, and especially near the Houses of Parliament, was much to be deprecated. The hon. Member is no doubt aware that there is an old Act on the Statute Book which prevents the assembling of any meeting within a certain limit of where Parliament is holding its sitting.

An hon. MEMBER: That is not on the Statute Book.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: If the hon. Member will refer to the Statutes at Large he will find that he has no warrant for his interruption. Whether it is orderly or not, I leave the Committee to decide.

MR. FIRTH: I made no interruption.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: I referred to the hon. Member for Camborne.

MR. CONYBEARE: The right hon. Gentleman is entirely mistaken. I did not say there was no such Statute in existence.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER: It shows the inconvenience of the interpolation of remarks while another Member is addressing the Committee. As a matter of fact the Parks Regulation Act was specially framed with a view to allowing the Government of the day, by the issuing of a Proclamation or the affixing of notices, to prevent a meeting in the Royal Parks. The passage through the streets of a large number of people having in view the object of attending a meeting is, I venture to say, a cause of great public inconvenience. For my part, I regret that Hyde Park should have been set apart for such purposes. St. James's Park has never been so used, and the Green Park has always been kept free from such proceedings. I hope the Government will not, under any conditions, think of inflicting such a nuisance as this upon the Metropolis. The hon. Member for Haggerston asks why those who come from the East End of London should be called upon to trudge a long distance past the Mall and Trafalgar Square to go to Hyde Park. Well, I say, as I said 20 years ago, it would be much better for the people of that district to hold their meetings at the East End; or, as was pointed out at the time I refer to, that Primrose Hill is a much more convenient site for such meetings, and more accessible from the residences of the majority of persons who attend them. But I think it is extremely wrong to induce those who live in the East End to proceed through crowded thoroughfares to hold a meeting in the West End which had much better be held in their immediate neighbourhood.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: I may venture to challenge the law of the right hon. Gentleman. I presume it is material to the discussion before the Committee, or you, Sir, would not have allowed it. I think he is mistaken as to the Statute, which does not forbid any meeting but only meetings for certain purposes.

*Mr. JAMES LOWTHER: Will the hon. Member allow me to say I am perfectly well aware of the terms of the Statute? The Statute forbids the holding of any meeting for the purpose of addressing any petition, notice, or remonstrance to Parliament within the City and Liberties of Westminster while Parliament is sitting, but it does not preclude a meeting being held under the very nose of Parliament for the purpose of passing a resolution.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH: I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say any meeting whatever, and I have many reasons for knowing that is incorrect.

Mr. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): The objection urged by hon. Gentlemen opposite would apply to Hyde Park as well as anywhere else. Where, I would ask, are the poor people to go? Primrose Hill is suggested, but I remember one occasion when people were told Trafalgar Square was the place instead of Hyde Park. Surely the Horse Guards Parade is a most convenient place for meetings. The people of London are being driven from pillar to post in search of a place in which to hold meetings without danger of interruption.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I did not intend to vote on this question, but after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet (Mr. J. Lowther) it seems to me the duty of every Liberal to do so. The right hon. Gentleman will deny the people of London the right to meet in any part of the Metropolis save Primrose Hill or the East End. I should have thought that the Horse Guards Parade was a very good place to meet in.

Mr. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): The right hon. Gentleman opposite evidently has no knowledge of London outside Club land. He does not know how far Primrose Hill is from the East End of London—probably he thinks they are in the same neighbourhood. Why, Primrose Hill is half way to Hampstead, and it is nothing short of an insult to the people of London to ask them to go there to hold their open air meetings.

Mr. CONYBEARE: The speech of the right hon. Gentleman opposite does him credit as a legislator and an ex-Minister. I understood him to quote from the Parks Regulation Act.

*Mr. J. LOWTHER: Oh, no.

Mr. CONYBEARE: The right hon. Gentleman said the Government had the right to issue a Proclamation forbidding meetings in the Parks under the Parks Regulation Act of 1872.

*Mr. J. LOWTHER: No; to pass rules.

Mr. CONYBEARE: That is a very different thing. Passing rules is not issuing a proclamation. The right hon. Gentleman has represented the Act in an utterly erroneous light. He has represented that meetings are forbidden in the Green Park and St. James's Park, whilst they are allowed in Hyde Park; but that is not the fact. The Act does not contain any provisions prohibiting public meetings any more than it contains provisions authorizing them. The three Parks mentioned are on entirely the same footing, authority being given to lay down rules, which you can see posted up in the Parks.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): On behalf of my Friends sitting round me, I wish to say that whilst we are not disappointed at the attitude the Government have taken up, we are grieved that we have been treated with such scant courtesy. I stated when I moved the reduction of the Vote that I had no wish to obstruct the proceedings, my wish being to obtain from the Government a statement of their reason for refusing to the people the right of meeting on the Horse Guards' Parade. We have asked one Member of the Government after another for a reason, but none has been given.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I would venture to point out that it will be utterly impossible to get through the Estimates if so much time is spent on these small Votes. I understood the hon. Member to move the reduction of the Vote as a protest against the public being prevented from holding meetings on the Horse Guards' Parade, and not with the view of calling upon me to give any further account of the action of the Government in the matter. In the course of the debate upon the Address, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary explained why it would be inconvenient, in the public interest, that large public meetings should be held on the Horse Guards' Parade or in St. James's Park, in the immediate neighbourhood of the public offices and the Houses of Parliament.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 71; Noes 107.—(Div. List, No. 51.)

Original Question again proposed.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Last year on the Vote for Richmond Park and Greenwich Park I drew attention to the large amount of space from the enjoyment of which the public are excluded. In Greenwich Park the public are excluded from the 15 acres which surround the Ranger's Lodge, occupied by Lord Wolseley. The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works says that this land costs the public nothing, but I maintain that even if the poor of London lose nothing but the enjoyment of it, that is too much, and ought not to be permitted.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The 15 or 16 acres of Greenwich Park that have been added to the grounds of the Ranger's Lodge have never been open to the public. In illustration of my anxiety to secure to the public the enjoyment of the Parks, I may mention that, in the case of Regent's Park, the expiring lease of the Toxophilite Society will not be renewed. I think the hon. Member will do me the justice to admit that since I have had the honour of holding my present office I have done all I could to make the Royal Parks more available to the public and to increase their value to the people.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Has this inclosure in Greenwich Park been recently added to the Ranger's Lodge? I think we have a right to know that.

*Mr. PLUNKET: It was added in 1815.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I wish to draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the trees in Kensington Gardens, near the Round Pond. Many trees have been cut down during recent years, and the condition under which others grow has been altered by levelling. Many of them now grow in a bed that is not natural to them, their roots being too thickly covered with soil. The health and even the lives of many of the trees—particularly the elms—have been imperilled in this way. Has the right hon. Gentleman any report as to the operations which have been carried out, and does he intend to replace the trees that have had to be removed?

*Mr. PLUNKET: I have consulted the best authorities on the subject, and have had numerous reports sent to me from time to time. For one reason or another I believe it is impossible to save the old trees; but I have very good reports of the young trees, which are being planted on a better system; and the Committee may rest assured that I shall not fail to take any steps likely to prevent the gardens being denuded of trees where it is desirable to have them.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): For years I have been hammering away at this matter, and have never been able to get any satisfaction. I do not believe it is old age that is killing the trees. Old trees, middle-aged trees, and young trees are all dying in certain parts of the Park, showing that there must be something wrong with the soil.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow.

Committee to sit again To-morrow.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

Read a second time, and committed for Monday 1st April.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES.

Resolutions [26th March] reported.

Class I.

(1.) "That a sum, not exceeding £29,238, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Maintenance and Repair of Royal Palaces."

Question, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution," put, and agreed to.

(2.) "That a sum, not exceeding £1,340, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Maintenance and Repair of Marlborough House."

Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I do not propose to renew at this stage the opposition that was offered in Committee to this Vote, but I do wish to call attention to the remarkable observation offered by the First Commissioner, and to the still more remarkable explanation offered by him this evening. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say in the first instance that the expenditure on Marlborough House was in consequence of an agreement entered into in 1878 between the Treasury and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. When I put a question to him he answered that there had been no such agreement, and that he never said there had been such an agreement. Now, Sir, in vindication of the position which I and others have taken up, I wish to say that in referring to the ordinary reports of the proceedings of this House I find that the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman is thus reported in the *Times* newspaper—

> "Mr. Plunket explained that the charges now asked to be provided for were undertaken by the nation on agreement entered into in 1878 in consideration of His Royal Highness spending a large sum on Marlborough House."

I myself in the course of the debate repeatedly referred to the understanding, or whatever it is, as an agreement without any objection being taken by the right hon. Gentleman. The senior Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) went a good deal further than I did, because he said it was a corrupt and profligate agreement. I do not mention this by way of insisting on the accuracy of the epithets he applied to it, but rather to show that he understood the First Commissioner to defend the Vote as the result of an agreement between the Treasury and the Prince of Wales. I do think that in justice to the House it is necessary to call attention to defences of this kind which are perpetually being set up in Committee of Supply, and I do think that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who have to defend Votes in this Committee owe it to themselves and to us to be extremely careful and precise and accurate in the statements they make in this Committee, especially on subjects of this nature.

*MR. PLUNKET: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that when I spoke the other evening I intended to use the very words I used in my reply to his question, and I believe I did, because I read out my statement from a note which I had before me—namely, that it was a direction given by the Treasury under certain circumstances which I explained. I am extremely sorry that the hon. Gentleman should have misunderstood me.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Do I understand that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales does not spend anything on the repair of Marlborough House? Is the nation under the obligation of maintaining this fabric both externally and internally? I believe on a former occasion some statement was made that the Marlborough House property was not on the same footing as the other Royal Palaces, but belonged to the nation, and was occupied by His Royal Highness on some sort of lease. I should like to know whether that is so?

*MR. PLUNKET: Marlborough House was in former times a Royal Palace, and it has also been used as an office; but at the time the Prince of Wales was coming of age an Act of Parliament was passed to enable Her Majesty to vest Marlborough House in His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales during his life. In 1878 His Royal Highness had spent a large sum out of his private resources on the maintenance of Marlborough House, and the Treasury then decided that, having regard to this expenditure, it would be fair that the external and internal repairs of the house should be made in the same way as in the case of certain other Royal Palaces.

Question put, and agreed to.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 7 agreed to.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to move the following clause to add to Section 3 of the Army Act, 1881:—

> "Provided also that no officer or other person in command of men of Her Majesty's Forces, in a church or other place of worship of any religious communion, shall be entitled to give any order or to do any act in contravention of the civil law against causing disturbances in a place of worship."

The object of this proposal is to render the military rule and usage conformable to the civil and ordinary law in respect of a congregation conducting their religious services without disturbance. Under an Act of the 23rd and 24th of the Queen, violence or riotous behaviour in a church or disturbance of the duly appointed ministers in religious worship is constituted an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment; but although a military officer would be subject to the law, yet if the military officer, by giving an order to his troops to withdraw from church, thereby caused a disturbance during service, he would not subject himself to any punishment at the hands of the civil authorities. I submit that officers should not be tempted, by the immunity afforded to them by the military regulations, to place themselves in conflict with the civil authorities. The necessity for the Amendment is proved by what occurred in the Catholic church at Clonmel on Sunday the 3rd of March.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE): I rise to order. The particular case to which the hon. Member alludes is *sub judice*, and I ask whether it is in order that any reference should be made to it?

MR. SEXTON: On the point of order, I may say I am only arguing in favour of making the military rule conformable to the ordinary law.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is extremely inconvenient, and the inconvenience may become of a most serious character, to discuss questions that are *sub judice*, but I know of no Rule of the House that prevents the hon. Member discussing this matter.

MR. SEXTON: I can assure you, Sir, that, so far from touching, I shall not even approach the question that is *sub judice*—I shall merely relate the circumstances as recorded by the Press without any attempt to prejudice the question. The Catholic soldiers were in church in charge of a young gentleman named Geoghegan, a lieutenant. The officiating clergyman was reading a Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of the Diocese, and suddenly lieutenant Geoghegan, who was seated in the organ gallery, rose and shouted to his men who were in the body of the church, "Troops outside." The Lieutenant immediately tramped out of church, followed by two sergeants; the rest of the soldiers remained until the end of the service. The incident led to a breach of the peace outside the church after the service, and I think we may very well congratulate ourselves that, instead of one breach of the peace, there was not a riot. Proceedings were taken against the lieutenant, who was sentenced by the magistrates to a fine, or a month's imprisonment, but the case is still *sub judice.* The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War was questioned on the subject in this House; and if he had then conveyed any censure, or expressed in the mildest manner any disapproval of the conduct of the lieutenant, I should not have pressed the subject on the attention of the House. But the right hon. Gentleman, referring to some dictum laid down by one of his predecessors in 1881, argued that some discretion must be allowed to officers in command of troops in places of religious worship in reference to the language used there. The right hon. Gentleman said he would not condemn this exercise of discretion by Lieutenant Geoghegan. It seems that something was said in the Pastoral Letter that did not meet the approval of the lieutenant. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman did not read the letter.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I have read the letter now.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman, then, have any objection to quote the passages which, in his opinion, justified the lieutenant in ordering his soldiers to withdraw from the church?

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see how that is relevant to the proposed clause. It is not a question of whether what was said justified a breach of a particular order.

MR. SEXTON: My argument is that if Lieutenant Geoghegan had discretion, the discretion was wrongly exercised. May I not submit, Sir, that the exercise of his discretion was such that it ought to have subjected him to the censure of the right hon. Gentleman?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not at all relevant to the clause which the right hon. Gentleman proposes to move.

MR. SEXTON: Well, Sir, I ask the right hon. Gentleman what he intends to do in similar cases in future? I can assure him that the opinion entertained by the Bishop of Clonmel is the opinion entertained by every other prelate in Ireland, as well as by nearly all the clergy, and, I ask, is he going to submit the 40,000 Catholic soldiers in the British Army to the alternative of disregarding the orders of their military superiors, or being disrespectful to the officers of their Church? Either the Government can provide religious services for the soldiers in the barracks, where they can conduct them at their own discretion, or else, if they send the soldiers to the churches provided by the people themselves, they must submit to the ordinary regulations. Is it to be said that any stripling, like Lieutenant Geoghegan, 20 years of age, is to be allowed to sit in judgment upon Bishop, whose Pastoral he hears, and to act in accordance with the decision he comes to? The discretion allowed to officers in matters of this kind is offensive to public feeling, and is unwise and futile; because I submit that the soldiers gave to the Pastoral a closer and more sympathetic attention than what they might otherwise have given to it if this incident had not occurred. It is impossible to attempt to insulate the minds of your soldiers. You can prevent them from hearing Pastorals, but you cannot prevent them from reading the newspapers; and you will, in any newspaper, in any day, find much severer comment on the action of the Government than is to be found in the Pastoral Letter. In the present state of Ireland occurrences of this kind are particularly dangerous. I warn the right hon. Gentleman that such Pastorals are likely to be read and heard in churches in Ireland for some time to come; and I warn him that grave difficulties will be caused unless he takes care that such an incident shall not occur again.

(Amendment of Section 3 of Army Act, 1881.)

At the end of Section 3 of "The Army Act, 1881," the following proviso shall be added: Provided also, "That no officer or other person in command of men of Her Majesty's Forces in a church or other place of worship of any religious communion shall be entitled to give any order or to do any act in contravention of the civil law against causing disturbance in a place of worship."—(*Mr. Sexton.*)

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

SIR W. MARRIOTT (Brighton): The right hon. Gentleman who proposes this Amendment says he does not wish to discuss a question that is *sub judice;* but the whole of this question is *sub judice* at the present moment.

MR. SEXTON: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. The declaration of the Secretary for War makes it clear that, whatever is the opinion of the Court of Appeal, the right hon. Gentleman will still refuse to censure the lieutenant.

SIR W. MARRIOTT: The case is *sub judice* at this moment, and the mouth of the Secretary of State is therefore closed; and with all due deference to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sexton) I really do not think the Clause has any meaning whatever. I do not know what distinction the hon. Gentleman draws between civil law and military; they are all laws of this House, and no officer can commit any offence against a law of this House without being brought before a civil tribunal. The Clause is, therefore, in my opinion, absolutely useless. It will not add one tittle to the responsibility of any officer in the duty he has to perform, either in church or out of church. I hope, therefore, the House will not agree to the proposal.

MR. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman has been severe upon me in a very polite manner. He is usually keen in his arguments, but I must say that his bluntness on this occasion is conspicuous by its absence. He misapprehends entirely the position of the Secretary of State for War; the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stanhope) has opened his mouth already, and opened it so widely that he has actually anticipated the decision of the Civil Courts, because he declared at the Table of this House that he could not, and would not, condemn the action of the Lieutenant. Now, I say, that according to that declaration, no matter what may be the decision of the Civil Court, the right hon. Gentleman is bound not to condemn the action of the Lieutenant. If my Amendment be accepted, and a man were condemned by the Civil Courts, I suppose the Secretary of State would be bound to take notice of his conduct, which, in itself, would be a very useful reform.

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Some short time ago I answered a question with regard to the conduct of this officer, and since I gave that answer, much to my surprise, civil proceedings have been taken. I had at that time no knowledge that civil proceedings were about to be taken, and I must say that I was very much surprised that they were taken. That being so, until the result of those proceedings is known, my mouth must remain closed, although the hon. Gentleman opposite has tried to prejudge the case.

MR. MOLLOY: The right hon. and learned Gentleman (Sir W. Marriott) does not seem to know that there is any difference between the conduct of an officer and that of a private person, but there is a considerable difference. An officer's action under the circumstances stated involves what is done by the troops under his command. Are we to allow an officer, acting upon the prejudice of the moment, he being, perhaps, a strong Liberal, or probably a strong Conservative, or a man holding eccentric views—a young man of only nineteen, and without sufficient experience, to exercise such a power as was exercised on the occasion in question? I do not think such a power ought to be allowed. There is a difference between the cases of troops going to a public Church and those who go to garrison service. It is in the power of the Commander of a station to prevent the troops going to a Church where he thinks they may hear what they ought not to hear, and send them elsewhere. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War shakes his head, and no doubt he is right to this extent, that the Commandant cannot send Protestants to a Catholic Church nor Catholics to a Protestant one; but he can refuse to let them go to a particular Church and arrange for them to have a service of their own. I have had some experience in military matters, and think it difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule as to the discretion of officers, but at the same time you may be involved in another difficulty if you give unlimited power to an officer who, under circumstances of excitement, political or otherwise, may give orders that will occasion much offence and inconvenience. I should have been glad had the right hon. Gentleman expressed an opinion as to the policy of this Amendment. I do not say it is in the exact form in which it might be finally accepted; but, at any rate, it is the duty of the Secretary of State to announce some policy in regard to this question. As he has not done so, I shall certainly support my hon. Friend's proposal.

*MR. F. MACLEAN (Woodstock): This Amendment appears to me to be based upon an entire misapprehension. It assumes that, as the law stands at present, an officer is entitled so to act as to create a disturbance in a place of worship. But is he so entitled? I have heard no argument from the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin to suggest that he is. In point of law he is not; and if he be not, if it be the law that an officer cannot so act, what reason is there for laying down in an Act of Parliament that which is now the law? It is quite clear that such is now the law, for in the very case cited by the right hon. Gentleman, the case which has given rise to this debate, the officer in question has been fined by a Civil Court of competent jurisdiction. That case is now *sub judice*, on appeal, so I will say no more about it. Under these circumstances I hope the Committee will reject the Amendment.

MR. CONYBEARE: The answer to this question is embodied in the Act of Parliament which prevents any officer or anyone else from brawling in church. Even if the civil law did not prevent this it is the duty of the Government to see that no officer shall perpetrate the indecency of brawling in church. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War ought to give an assurance that he will not allow the bad example in this case to be followed by other officers, and that he will take official notice of any such misconduct. The right hon. Gentleman has said he was surprised at the civil action taken against the officer. Why is he surprised? Because the Government think that everybody except the military and police ought to submit to any sort of treatment on the part of their agents in Ireland, and that it is not for any ordinary citizen to take action against the merest stripling in the Army, because he holds a commission and chooses to disgrace it by misconduct. I do not suppose the magistrates would have fined him were it not so. Public opinion will not be found to be with the Government in this matter, and I am glad the Lord Mayor of Dublin has brought it forward, and hope he will press his Amendment to a division.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I think the House will feel that it was a very improper thing for any priest or clergyman to indulge in tirades against the law, and I hope that some consideration will be shown to the young officer, and that all the sympathy of those who want to see justice done will not be given to the priest.

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I quite understand a technical difficulty in inserting this Amendment. But the Amendment raises the general question whether a subaltern is to be the final Court of Appeal as to the doctrines, propriety, and good taste of a sermon. Soldiers, like other men, have their own political and religious opinions; but it ought to be our object to keep military questions distinct from political or religious matters. Practically it comes to this: You cannot exclude soldiers from a knowledge of what is going on in the world—you cannot interfere with their political sympathies. Your object should be not to provoke the soldiers into political action. If there be a flagrant case—I do not say that such a case may not arise—in which so-called religious teaching is clearly inconsistent with the discipline of the Army, well, then, I think the commanding officer of the district, not a subaltern sitting in the church, would be justified in giving directions that the soldiers were not again to be taken to that place of worship. I would suggest to my right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor that he would do wisely to postpone any further discussion of this question until the legal question has been decided. We shall have an opportunity of discussing on the Army Estimates—and I think that would be the proper time—the question of the jurisdiction of the Secretary of State for War, and whether it has been exercised properly. I think this clause would be inappropriate. It is a contradiction in itself, so to speak, because it is quite clear that nothing can be done which the Civil Law disallows. But that is not the reason of my right hon. Friend. He wants to challenge—and I join him in it—the discretion of the military authorities in what I think was a lamentable interference with the worship of the soldiers.

Mr. SEXTON (West Belfast): I wish to point out to the Committee that the Irish Constabulary attend church and hear every sermon or pastoral that is delivered. The Royal Irish Constabulary are very closely concerned in public matters, yet I never heard of any officer withdrawing them from any church. That exhibits in a moment, and in a clear light, the folly of the order given by this young lieutenant. But I hope to make the matter clear to the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. H. Fowler). The Secretary for War declared from the Table that this young officer had acted rightly; and at the very time the Court of First Instance condemned this young officer, the right hon. Gentleman gets up at that Table and expresses surprise that these proceedings should have been taken. What does the right hon. Gentleman say to that? He gets up at the Table and uses a phrase which, if language has any meaning at all, implies that the proceedings ought not to have been taken, and perhaps might be reversed on appeal. Does not the House perceive that there is a clear discordance between the practice of the civil and military authorities, because the Court holds one view and the War Office another. We have no assurance whatever, if the Court of First Instance is confirmed by the judgment of the Court of Appeal, that the right hon. Gentleman will take any action. Look at the position of the Secretary for War: he upholds the order given by the officer, and which has been declared by the Court to be illegal. Then, when we come to look at the matter from the point of view of discipline, we find an order given, and disobeyed by the soldiers. You have been dragged into a dilemma by your absurd regulation. If you punish the soldiers you insult the Church, because you punish them for not having left the building. If you uphold the order, then you must punish the soldiers for disobedience. Will the right hon. Gentleman say that he will punish the soldiers? And if he does not punish the soldiers how does he maintain the order? Under the Government there are 40,000 Roman Catholic soldiers, who have a right to be protected against the possible repetition of an order which may be condemned by a Court of Law, and which, at the same time, may be condemned by the War Secretary, and the question of punishment for disobedience apparently remains in suspense. Is that a reasonable or sensible condition of military discipline? Let the soldiers know what orders to obey and what not to obey, and let the officers know what orders to give and what not to give.

I always listen to any suggestion which falls from the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, and I am not disposed to trouble the House if the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War will say anything reasonable, if he will say that he will consider the order, or will cause a communication to be addressed to Lieutenant Geoghegan, or a general communication to the officers limiting their discretion in such a matter, with a view to preventing a repetition of these scenes. I am sure that such an order defeats its own purpose. I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is ready to consider the subject, and, if he is ready to give fair and reasonable consideration to it, I am not disposed to give the House any further trouble.

SIR. W. T. MARRIOTT: This is not a question concerning the order or the law as it at present stands, and if these words of the hon. Gentleman are added it would be rather trying to deal with the subject by a sidewind. I am quite sure that the Secretary of State for War will have the sympathy of Members on both sides of the House in refraining from expressing an opinion on a case which is *sub judice.* If this young man has broken the law he will be punished, but we cannot make an *ex post facto* law. It is our wish that the soldiers should have perfect freedom to attend church or chapel as they choose; and I know from my own personal experience that they have in the Army every liberty of conscience, for it is our desire that they should have that freedom. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton sees the objection to this Amendment. It is absolutely useless. If this young man has broken the law he will be punished, but we cannot make an *ex post facto* law.

MR. SEXTON: May I point out to the hon. and learned Gentleman that his usually subtle and judicial intellect has failed him on this occasion. By the 23 and 24 Vic., to create a disturbance in any place of worship is an offence. But the Secretary for War says that when an officer creates a disturbance by ordering the troops to withdraw it is not an offence.

*MR. STANHOPE: I have not said so.

MR. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman said the officer was justified in exercising his discretion.

*MR. STANHOPE: The question at issue now before the Courts is whether the lieutenant was guilty of the offence of disorderly conduct, and upon that I expressed no opinion. Whether he has committed an offence against the Civil Law, the Civil Court must decide.

MR. SEXTON: I want on this subject to make the military the civil point of view. I wish to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Civil Court, should the Court of First Instance be confirmed, by punishing or reprimanding the lieutenant? That is a plain question for him to answer.

*MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark): I think it would be an inconvenient course to press this Amendment to a division, still I think the Secretary for War has entirely himself to blame, for it is, in itself, a prejudgment of the case to express surprise that the proceedings should have been taken. But in doing that he only followed the precedent set by his Colleagues in these Irish affairs — namely, that of throwing contempt upon the constituted tribunals of the country whenever they are likely to go against the Administration. While I am ready to vote with the right hon. Gentleman, I think, speaking as a lawyer, that the Amendment is inconvenient, and that it would be wiser not to press it.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: The Secretary of State for War has said that he will reserve his judgment upon this case until he has heard the decision of the Court of Appeal.

*MR. STANHOPE: I said I objected to express an opinion on the proceedings in the Civil Court.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Assume it is decided that the lieutenant acted illegally, I defy the Secretary for War or any military authority to set aside that decision; but, if it is decided that he acted legally, then it becomes a question of military discretion, and this is neither the time nor the occasion to raise that question of military discretion. That is a subject which we could discuss on the Secretary for War's salary or on any other item of the Army Estimates. Whatever decision you take upon this Amendment now, to my mind, it would mislead and have no pronounced effect. While I sympathize with the Lord Mayor of Dublin, yet this Amendment does not advance the case one step. I therefore think it will be better for the right hon. Gentleman to await the decision of the Civil Court, and not to press the matter to a Division.

MR. SEXTON: If the Amendment is carried, the effect of it will be that the Secretary of State will be obliged to take notice of the decision of the Civil Court. As I understand it, the right hon. Gentleman will suspend his judgment until the Civil Court has decided.

*MR. STANHOPE: No.

MR. SEXTON: Then what does the right hon. Gentleman intend? Will he, or will he, not await the judgment of the Civil Court?

*MR. STANHOPE: I have already said that on non-military points I shall await the judgment of the Civil Court.

MR. SEXTON: And if the judgment of the Civil Court be adverse to Lieut. Geogehan, will the right hon. Gentleman reprimand that officer?

*MR. STANHOPE: That is a question I entirely decline to answer.

MR. SEXTON: Then I shall divide the Committee.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 98; Noes 159.—(Div. List, No. 59.)

Bill reported, with Amendment; to be read a third time To-morrow.

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—[BILL 166.]

SECOND READING.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Buteshire): I move the Second Reading of this Bill.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): I desire to enter my protest against this method of introducing new legislation for Scotland. I think it looks like an insult to Scotch Members to ask them at 12 o'clock at night to pass measures changing old Scotch law. I think the Lord Advocate should give us some reasons for bringing in this Bill.

*MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I think the observations just made by my hon. Friend show that there is an unfortunate tendency on the part of the Front Benches to introduce Bills of an important character without giving the House the advantage of any explanation of their provisions. Now, the truth is that this is a good and excellent Bill. It refers to a subject of which I know something, and I think the objects of the Bill are most proper. But this constitutes no reason why the Government should not take the trouble to explain to the lay Members of this House what its provisions are. I shall, indeed, leave it to the Lord Advocate to explain the provisions of the Bill. I only desire to ask one question with regard to the fourth Clause, which provides compensation for a certain officer, on the ground that his office is abolished. Now, Sir, I think the Lord Advocate, as much as any man in this House, will agree with me most cordially that the proper way is to call things by their right names. This officer may be entitled to some reward, or to some pension for services, but he is not entitled to compensation on the ground of abolition of office. But, Sir, his office is not to be abolished; its duties are to be extended and largely increased, and therefore I do not think it is right to say that the office is abolished by the Bill, and that the present owner should have special compensation.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: If I abstained from speaking on the introduction of this debate, that course has been amply justified by the excellent speech of my hon. Friend opposite, who has pronounced the Bill to be a good one. The objects of the Bill are twofold. In the first place, it is proposed to combine the two offices of Accountant in Bankruptcy and what is called Accountant of Court in Scotland, in order to bring together the supervision of all estates in the hands of the Court, which had hitherto been separated, and for which separation there is no valid reason. At the present time, estates in the hands of the Court stand in this position. Some are subject to supervision by the Accountant in Bankruptcy, and some are subject to no supervision at all, although both classes of estates stand in the same category, as being estates for which the Court is responsible. It is desirable to bring together, under the supervision of an accountant, all estates, and therefore the two offices are to be merged, giving a general supervision of all estates in the hands of the Court. These are the main objects of the Bill; there are some minor provisions, into which I need not enter, because they are of a technical description, but I should like to inform the House that while the Bill purports to extend, and does extend, the supervision of the Court over estates, yet there is a reduction of expenditure on the offices in question. The hon. Member for North West Lanarkshire has referred to the fourth section. I need hardly say that this is merely one of the arrangements, settled under the very vigilant supervision of the Treasury, for the introduction of a new system, by permitting the retirement of a gentleman who has hitherto conducted one branch of the work, and who is not prepared to undertake additional duties. I do not think that any further guarantee is required for the efficacy of the provision, than the fact that it has been assented to by the Treasury. In the words of my hon. Friend opposite, I can only repeat that this is an excellent Bill, which is directed to secure increased efficiency and increased economy, and the combination of these two objects surely cannot be unpopular among hon. Members. I therefore hope they will accord the Bill a Second Reading, and devote their attention to securing in Committee any alterations which may be necessary.

*MR. HALDANE (Haddington): It is a matter for congratulation that we have at last got to the consideration of a Scotch Bill before 12 o'clock at night. I think that we shall all agree that this is a useful Bill, seeing that it will provide for supervising the administration of estates in Scotland by judicial factors. I do not know whether the public are aware how costly the administration of these estates is. The most important provision in the Bill is, I think, contained in Clause 12, which provides, in effect, that English estates are to be handed over to judicial factors, who, I understand, give security, but not always to the satisfaction of the English Judges. I think a great deal may be said in criticism of this clause, but, on the other side, I think it will simplify matters a great deal, and put an end to much litigation. Notwithstanding this Clause, I think the Bill is a most useful one, and I think it ought to be read a second time.

Question, "That this Bill be read a second time," put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday, 4th April.

OFFICIAL SECRETS BILL.—[BILL 97.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Sir, I wish to say just a word or two with regard to this Bill. It has been prepared under the direction of the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty, in order to punish the offence of obtaining information, and communicating it, against the interests of the State. The Bill is an exceedingly simple one, and I beg to move its Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir R. E. Webster.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid.): I really think we require some further explanation than the miserable one afforded to this House by the hon. and learned Gentleman. I really think he is trifling with this House in introducing a measure of this importance with such brief explanation. I earnestly protest against the method and manner in which measures of this sort are brought in at this hour of the night. It is not so very late, and there is ample time and opportunity for explaining the meaning of it. We want to know what there is behind the Bill. I do not say that we look upon this measure with suspicion, but I think we may reasonably ask for the reasons for its introduction; and I, therefore, trust that this House will understand me when I make this protest from below the Gangway, and I hope hon. Members opposite will join with me in insisting on obtaining further explanations before the Bill is allowed to pass.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday, 1st April.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES BILL. [BILL 136.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH): I introduced this Bill last summer. I have received very many communications with regard to the measure, and I have taken advantage of them and made such amendments in the Bill as appeared necessary. I think that in its present shape the Bill will be a very useful amendment of the law relating to weights and measures, without being open to any of the objections raised last year. Objection was taken last year by the baking trade throughout the country to the provisions relating to the sale of bread, and after full consideration I have thought it better to omit the provisions on that subject, and to leave the law as regards the sale of bread in its present state until the time comes for complete amendment. The Bill is now divided into two parts. The first part contains minor amendments of the law in the direction of giving greater power to the local authorities to secure regular and systematic inspection and to prevent fraud in the use of weights and measures. The first 15 Clauses relate to points of detail of the kind which I think will be better explained in Committee than at the present stage. The second part of the Bill relates to very important matter, and proposes to introduce generally throughout the country the same restrictions as to the sale of coal by weight as now prevail in the Metropolis. I need not dwell on the very great frauds that can be committed, and frequently are now committed, in the sale of coal, often upon the poorest of the people, under the lax state of the law which at present prevails. I shall be glad to receive any communications with regard to the Bill, and to consider them. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I do not propose to delay the progress of this measure, which I regard as an exceedingly useful one. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the practice which obtains in London in regard to the sale of coal. I believe he wishes to make an earnest effort to prevent the barefaced and shameful frauds which are perpetrated upon the poor by the so-called coal dealers of London; and all I desire from him is an assurance that he will seriously consider any Amendments made in Committee in that direction.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee): I hope this Bill may be read a second time, but I am sorry it does not go much further than it does in the direction suggested by the hon. Member for Haggerston (Mr. Cremer). One of the advantages of the Bill undoubtedly is that it causes Inspectors of Weights and Measures in future to obtain certificates of qualification, but the particular point I wish to express regret about is, that the Bill may have the effect of perpetuating still longer the extremely anomalous state of things in the country with regard to Weights and Measures, which is different from that which exists in any other country in Europe.

*Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): This Bill may be considered to be what is ordinarily known as a Departmental Bill, and it is quite possible that the officers of the Department who frame them may be deficient in familiarity with the practical working of systems with which they interfere. I do not propose to do anything in the way of opposing the Second Reading of the Bill, but I desire to ask that when we come to the Committee stage, it may be considered how far Part II. of the Bill is applicable to the case of large dealings in coal. Small consumers may require to be protected by stringent regulations. I do not deny that, as to the retail trade, it may be desirable that coal should be sold by weight; but I cannot think it is necessary that people who deal in large quantities of coal should be bound by such a rule. In many cases it would be extremely inconvenient to require sale by weight, as, for instance, where it is sold by the boatload, and it is a comparatively easy matter to arrive at the weight by means of the displacement. Why should an arrangement of this kind, which is approved by both buyer and seller, be rendered illegal? I hope that in Committee my right hon. Friend will consent to allow of the continuance of systems other than that of weighing, when they are sufficiently accurate for the purpose of the trade.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: What has been said in the course of this discussion makes me entertain the view, which I was disposed to before, that it would be very much better that this Bill should be considered by a Standing Committee rather than by a Committee of the whole House. I therefore beg to move that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade," put, and agreed to.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1883) AMENDMENT BILL.

[BILL 58.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. The Bill is intended to remedy what has been generally recognized by agriculturists as a weak point in the Act of 1883. The system of valuation has led to very considerable expense, owing to its being necessary for every party to select a valuator. Under the proposals of this Bill, the Sheriff, failing agreement, will have the right to appoint a valuator, who will then be judicial referee. In this way simplicity of proceeding will be effected, as well as economy.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Munro Ferguson.*)

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I think the Bill ought to be read a second time. The proposal, I believe, will conduce, in the main, to efficiency and economy, and it may possibly deprive arbitrations of one of the characteristics which, I am afraid, often belong to them of two of the functionaries being more or less of a partizan character. There are some provisions in the Bill which are susceptible of amendment, and I fancy the hon. Member will not resent the proposal of some changes which will better harmonize his proposals with the state of the law.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday, 1st April.

DISPENSARY HOUSES (IRELAND) ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.—[BILL 120.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. The object of the measure is a very small one; it is merely to remedy a defect of a technical nature in the Act now in operation in Ireland. There is very great difficulty in obtaining suitable sites for dispensaries, and the Bill is to give greater facilities in that direction.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Macartney.*)

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I really think that we should have had some opportunity of considering this Bill before the Second Reading was proposed. At any rate, courtesy might have prompted the promoters of the Bill to have put it before the members of the medical profession. Personally, I have not heard one word in favour of the Bill from any of my professional colleagues in Ireland; and if the measure is intended to benefit the sick poor, who are better able to offer an opinion upon it than the man who has to look after the poor? I certainly take issue with the hon. Member when he says that the Bill is to afford greater facilities for the provision of dispensary houses in Ireland. Such places can be provided without any Bill of this kind. I should like to know from one or other of its promoters whether the operation of the Bill is to be limited entirely to Belfast and to the North of Ireland? At any rate, in order to give hon. Gentlemen an opportunity of explaining the matter properly, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the

Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary): I beg to second the Amendment, and also to protest against the manner in which the Bill has been introduced. There is a good deal in what my hon. Friend has said. It may very truly be said that the Bill has been sprung on the House. We have had no proper explanation of the provisions of the Bill. We on this side of the House are quite prepared to support any measure that has for its object the acquiring of land for the purpose of carrying out with greater facility the object of the Dispensary Law, but the hon. Member (Mr. Macartney), in moving the Second Reading, said the Bill was for the purpose of rectifying a technical error in the law as it already stands. Did he point it out? How do we know that such a technical error exists? It is preposterous to expect that Irish Members will support a measure introduced in such a manner.

MR. MACARTNEY: I did not wish to take up the time of the House when I moved the Second Reading of the Bill, but I admit the objections hon. Members opposite have taken call for some reply from me. The Bill was not brought in in the interest of any part of Ireland particularly, but the circumstances which have led me to introduce the Bill have occurred in that part of the country with which I am more familiarly acquainted than, perhaps, hon. Members opposite. The Dispensary Board of my Union have been unable to acquire land for the purpose of a dispensary because there is no land available, and I have introduced this Bill for the purpose of enabling the Dispensary Boards not only in the North of Ireland but in all parts of Ireland, to acquire land exceeding 60 years' tenure. No political or sectarian considerations are involved, and therefore I hope hon. Members will not hesitate to agree to the Second Reading.

MR. BIGGAR (Cavan): There is one great reason why I am disposed to look upon questions affecting the administration of the Medical Charities Act in Ireland with suspicion, and it is that the ratepayers are always involved in extravagant expenditure. I know a case in which, while the amount spent on the support of paupers was £500 in the year, the payments made under the Medical Charities Act exceeded £500. I do not see any justification for laying out public money on buildings under the Medical Charities Act if ——

MR. MACARTNEY: I beg to move that the Question be now put.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. BIGGAR: In many parts of Ireland there is now an agitation to consolidate Poor Law unions. If such consolidation takes place, surely the old Poor Law buildings could be easily utilized for any purposes connected with the Medical Charities Act.

MR. MACARTNEY rose in his place and claimed to move "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent and declined then to put that Question.

And, it being midnight, Mr. SPEAKER rose to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Mr. MACARTNEY rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday, 1st April.

TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT (1847) AMENDMENT BILL. [BILL 65.]

As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday, 1st April.

HORSEFLESH (SALE FOR FOOD) BILL. [Bill 149.]

Read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 4th April.

MOTION.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Seale-Hayne, Bill for the purpose of amending the Law in regard to the appointment, qualification, and removal of Justices of the Peace, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Bernard Coleridge, Mr. Howell, Mr. Stuart Rendel, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, and Mr. Arthur Williams.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 176.]

House adjourned at five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 10.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [April 6.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 29*th March*, 1889.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 2) BILL.—

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

CONSOLIDATED BILL. (No. 1.)

Received the Royal Assent.

THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

Viscount **HARDINGE**, in rising to ask the Government what progress had been made with regard to the selection of a site for the National Portrait Gallery, said: My Lords, I have so often asked this question before that I am almost ashamed to put it now. I cannot say that I have ever received any satisfactory answer from Her Majesty's Government. The matter is one that cropped up some weeks ago, when my noble Friend (Lord Lamington) brought forward the question of public buildings in the Metropolis, and on that occasion my noble Friend (Lord Henniker) certainly did not give a very re-assuring answer. What I have always contended for is this—that the National Portrait Gallery has a preferential claim over all other departments of Science and Art, because three years ago a promise was made that two years would not elapse before an arrangement was made for removing the pictures from Bethnal Green, which is not a suitable place for them, and where they are hardly appreciated. I know it is said that just at this moment there is considerable pressure upon the Government in consequence of the demands in respect to the National Defences; but if that policy is to be pursued in any continuity—which I certainly trust it will be—it may be years before anything is done, before we get a site, or before any steps are taken to build a new National Portrait Gallery. Last year a deputation composed of Peers and Members of Parliament presented a Memorial to the First Lord of the Treasury which was very numerously signed. The First Lord received the deputation with his usual courtesy, but since then nothing has come of it. During the Autumn Session of last year a question was asked in the House of Commons as to what were the intentions of Her Majesty's Government with regard to that matter. Mr. Plunket on that occasion stated that he was in communication with Mr. Scharf on the question. That satisfied the hon. Member who put the question; but, on inquiry of Mr. Scharf, I find that the only suggestion Mr. Plunket made was that Madame Tussaud's Waxworks were to be placed at the disposal of the Trustees of the Gallery. Now, it is quite a novel idea to turn a waxwork exhibition into a National Gallery; but I think the great objection to it was that the building was insufficient, and was quite as much out of the way as Bethnal Green. When the last Government were in office, Mr. Mitford prepared elaborate plans for a new gallery in Delahay Street. That had great merits, and we were in hopes that something was going to be done; but now, it appears, a company has got hold of this land, so that the site is gone. Then there were other plans. There is the site at Millbank; the prison there is going to be pulled down, and there is a very

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

large extent of ground behind in Victoria Street. Any of these sites might be negotiated for, at any rate; but nothing is being done. Then, I must draw my noble Friend's attention to the fact that we are constantly having donations and bequests coming in, and we do not know where to put them. We are practically in a small lodging house at 20, Great George Street, where you can hardly get full-lengths up the staircase. The consequence is we have been obliged, as a last resort, to ask the Trustees of the National Gallery to receive those pictures that are too large in their cellars. We have been obliged to send to the lower part of the National Gallery that most interesting picture presented by the Emperor of Austria of the House of Commons, with Pitt addressing the House, and also another most interesting picture, of the Conference of 1604. These are two extremely valuable pictures, and they must remain there out of sight until the Government do something. I wish to correct an answer which my noble Friend gave the other night to a question of the noble Lord opposite (Lord Sandhurst). The question was as to the number of visitors to the Exhibition at Bethnal Green, and my noble Friend said it was five times as large as before the pictures went there. The real state of things is that for two years the number has rather diminished. In 1880 there were 450,000 visitors; in 1886 there were 480,000; in 1887 it dropped to 409,000; in 1888 it rose to 910,000, but this was the Jubilee year, and the large crowds were no doubt principally attracted by the exhibition of Her Majesty's Jubilee presents. But there is another much more serious thing with regard to the Bethnal Green Museum, and that is the deterioration of the pictures there. The pictures are all cracking. I have a Report from Mr. Scharf, who inspected the Gallery together with two experts, and that Report is—

> "Those portraits on the side walls have suffered most. The walls are very thin, and the changes of climate during night-time seem to have taken a greater effect on them. The other portraits show less marks of deterioration."

I am sorry to say there are upwards of 40 portraits, many of them extremely good ones, that are so attacked. Under these circumstances I must say I think it is hard upon the Trustees who are responsible for the proper keeping of the pictures that this state of things should be allowed to continue. I want to know from my noble Friend whether any move has been made—whether any correspondence has taken place between the Office of Works and the Treasury upon the subject; because if we are to go on year after year receiving the same answer, and nothing being done, the pictures will all go to rack and ruin.

Lord LAMINGTON: Before my noble Friend replies to this question, I wish to refer to the answer which my noble Friend gave me the other evening. I did not catch the observation at the time, but the noble Lord is reported to have said that a great many more people visited the Bethnal Green Museum since the pictures have been there than visited the old gallery at the West End. Now, I want to point out that there is another exhibition at Bethnal Green, and if account be taken of the ordinary visitors, I do not believe it will be found that the number of the visitors to the pictures simply has increased. Very recently I visited Bethnal Green for the purpose of seeing for myself what is taking place. A great number of people were there, but they were not the class of people who care for historic pictures, and the collection is entirely lost in its present position. Now, a great number of these pictures have been presented to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery by families, in order that they might be placed in a favourable position, and so prove an advantage to the nation. Many of these families feel considerably aggrieved that the pictures should be left at Bethnal Green, and, if nothing is to be done to house the pictures properly, I think it would only be just that they should be returned to their donors. What has been stated to-day by my noble Friend as to the deterioration of the pictures is a matter of very great importance, because we must remember that portraits cannot be replaced.

The Earl of MILLTOWN: I would like to ask my noble Friend (Lord Henniker) whether the Government have considered or will consider the possibility of obtaining Her Majesty's gracious permission to utilize the large Banqueting House, Whitehall, for this purpose? That beautiful building was designed by Inigo Jones for James I. in the beginning of the 17th century. It as all that was ever carried out of the magnificent Palace which he designed for that Monarch to replace the old Palace which shortly before had been burnt down. It has sustained two subsequent fires; and it remains there the finest specimen of Italian architecture in this country, and one of the most beautiful of the building which adorns the Metropolis. It was built and originally used, as it was intended, as a Banqueting Hall; but since the reign of George I. it has been used as a chapel, but it has never been consecrated. It is about as as un-ecclesiastical looking a building as it is possible to imagine. It faces north and south instead of east and west. It is hung with curtains in a theatrical manner. Its ceiling is covered with a beautiful mosaic by Rubens of the apotheosis of James I., who was hardly an ecclesiastical personage, and certainly not one whose apotheosis one would expect to see on the roof of a chapel. Under these circumstances it appears to me no more consecrated to Divine worship than is one of your Lordships dining rooms where family prayers take place from time to time.

LORD SANDHURST: In the one or two remarks which I shall make, I hope the noble Viscount will understand that I am in no way hostile to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, nor that I grudge the removal of the Gallery back to South Kensington, but I hope it will be possible to replace it in Bethnal Green by a collection of miscellaneous pictures, which would probably interest the people of that quarter more than a collection of national portraits. There is another point which I would ask the noble Lord to take into consideration, and that is, whether it would not be possible, and advisable, to establish, instead of these large picture collections, two or three small ones in two or three of the more densely populated districts of London. The South Kensington Museum, the National Gallery, and the British Museum are at a very great distance from the East End, Islington, Shoreditch, Hackney, and, to the south of the river, Bermondsey is extremely badly off with respect to Art Collections, and I hope that Her Majesty's Government will take the matter into their consideration.

*LORD HENNIKER: I am sorry to say that I can really add very little to what I have stated more than once in this House on this subject. The whole question of finding a permanent home for this valuable collection is one which depends upon the Treasury recommending the expenditure and Parliament finding the money. If they sanction it and find the money, there will be no difficulty whatever in finding a site, or in regard to proper plans. It appears to the First Commissioner of Works, as I think it will appear to your Lordships, that there is no use in providing plans and proposing a site if the money is not forthcoming to provide the site and carry out the plans. In fact, it is useless to put a scheme before the Treasury which is not one which is immediately and imperatively required. I quote the words "immediately" and "imperatively" from a Circular from the Treasury; and this is a rule strictly laid down by the Department. Certainly this is one of the works which ought to be undertaken as soon as possible; but there are others which ought to take precedence of a National Portrait Gallery. One of the important works which come into this category is the erection of new Admiralty buildings. As I said the other day, it is only proposed to ask for a very small Vote to begin to carry out the plan already adopted with regard to the Admiralty. The calls for national defence are very great upon the Government and Parliament at the present moment, and it is very difficult to ask for a grant for public works. If the pictures were suffering in Bethnal Green, as the noble Lord said, of course the question of providing a permanent home for them becomes one of greater urgency; but neither myself nor the Office of Works had any information on that point until my noble Friend (Lord Hardinge) was kind enough to mention the matter to me privately the other day; and no complaint had been made at the Office of Works on the subject. I must remind your Lordships of this: that the Office of Works has nothing to do with the care of the pictures; it is only their duty to provide a building to contain them. This applies to what my noble Friend (Lord Sandhurst) said as to loans of pictures in different parts of London. It is the Trustees who are responsible for the pictures, and I suppose it would be their duty in a case of this kind to make a representation to the Government that the pictures were not properly housed, and no doubt such a representation will be made. Apart from this consideration, it does not appear that any serious evil arises from these pictures being at the Bethnal Green Museum. As has appeared lately from the public Press, the place where the pictures are appears to please the public. The way in which the pictures are hung give the student a far better opportunity of seeing them than he ever had at South Kensington. I cannot think for a moment that any real student would object to take a journey down to Bethnal Green to see the pictures as they are hung at present. There are numbers of visitors who never had an opportunity of seeing the collection before, and might never have done so if the pictures were not where they are. I should like here to give some explanation as to what I said the other day, particularly as my noble Friend who brought this question forward has found fault with what I said. I was misreported. I had not the figures with me at the time, and I spoke from recollection; but I told your Lordships that I believed that the number of visitors in the first year that the pictures were removed to Bethnal Green was three or four times (not four or five times, as my noble Friend said just now) as many as the number who visited the collection the last year it remained at South Kensington. I made one mistake. I said I thought I based my recollection on a Return on 1887; I ought to have said 1886. The pictures were removed to Bethnal Green in September, 1885. What I based my calculation upon was this. I based my calculation with regard to South Kensington on the ten years from 1876 to 1885, in which year the pictures were moved from South Kensington to Bethnal Green. During that ten years the largest attendance was in 1883, when 146,187 visited the Gallery at South Kensington. During 1884, the last complete year the pictures were at South Kensington, 127,716 visited the Gallery; in the first complete year at Bethnal Green, that was in 1886, the number was 446,722. My calculation was, therefore, not far wrong. That was the only information I had to go upon, but I afterwards asked for a Return, and since I came into the House to-day, a few minutes ago, I have received a letter from Mr. Scharf, who says—

> "There is no means of distinguishing at the Bethnal Green Museum with what particular object visitors enter the Museum. One set of turnstiles lead to every department. Vagrant children of a tender age count the same as grown-up, cultivated persons. A large number of the former preponderate. Since the addition of the portraits to the Bethnal Green collection the total yearly number of visitors has diminished. In 1884 and 1885, before the portraits, the number of visitors was 447,330 and 450,439; in 1886, with the portraits, the number was 446,722; in 1887, with the portraits, 409,929; and in 1888, with the Jubilee presents on view, 910,511."

I think I was justified in making the statement I did. On this statement, there can clearly be no means of judging who visits the pictures, unless it be the Return of those who pass through the turnstiles; and, again, I have no information as to the difference of numbers being increased from any special reason except in 1888, when the Jubilee presents to Her Majesty were on view. The noble Lord has said something about pledges as to the building of a National Portrait Gallery. I myself know of no promises having been made since I have been connected with the Department over which my right hon. Friend Mr. Plunket presides. At all events, I never made any promise in your Lordships' House, either on my own behalf or on behalf of Mr. Plunket. He is, I know, extremely anxious to find a permanent home for these pictures as soon as possible, and he is quite ready to proceed the moment the Treasury and Parliament grant the money for a site and settle the plans for the erection of a building. I quite appreciate what my noble Friend says as to the inconvenience of pictures being put away in cellars at the National Gallery, and I have no doubt that the First Commissioner does the same. With regard to the correspondence, any correspondence that I have is quite at the service of the noble Viscount; but it really throws no light upon the matter because it simply relates to the leave given by the Treasury at the instance of the Works Department for the loan of the pictures to the Bethnal Green Museum, with some letters from the noble Viscount and the Science and Art Department on the same subject. That is all the correspondence we have since 1886. I do not think it would be worth while to print it; it is very short, and does not touch the points to which the noble Viscount has alluded. As to the question raised by my noble Friend (Lord Milltown) whether Whitehall Chapel could be used as a gallery for these pictures. I will call the attention of the First Commissioner to his proposal, but it is the first I have heard of it, and I hardly think that I can encourage him in thinking that it will be successful.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: There can be no doubt that any one who really wishes to see the pictures can see them at Bethnal Green with great effect. At the same time, I believe very strongly that the time has come when the pictures which have there found a temporary home should be brought back. If, as the noble Viscount avers, the pictures are being injured at Bethnal Green, that seems to be an answer to the suggestion as to taking other pictures there, until, at all events, the place is put in such a state that the works can be exhibited without sustaining injury. With regard to the loan of pictures generally, there are certain principles on which the Science and Art Department grants loans of art subjects to localities, and they are always ready to consider favourably any plan which seems to offer advantages for the instruction and elevation of the people, due regard being had to the safety of the collection.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON NAVAL AND MILITARY DEPARTMENTS.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON, in rising to inquire whether Her Majesty's Government could give any information as to the time when the Commission appointed last year to consider the administration of the Naval and Military Departments would report; also whether it was part of the duty of the Commission to report whether the great delays in the manufacture and production of guns were due to defects in our administrative system, said: Your Lordships will doubtless remember the general object of this Commission, and the circumstances under which it was appointed last year. The Commission is a very important one. Lord Hartington is the Chairman; the First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Randolph Churchill are among its Members. It was a question debated much at the time of the appointment of the Commission whether some means should not be provided for fixing authoritatively the standard of military and naval strength. I think myself that no one will really be satisfied until this is somehow arrived at. If such a standard could be fixed, a great deal of present controversy would be saved, and we should no longer, as now, be working very often in the dark. But that was not the decision which was then arrived at, and Her Majesty's Government recommended the appointment of a Commission, which was "to consider the administration of the Military and Naval Departments"—in fact, to consider the relations between those Departments, and between them and the Treasury. My Lords, this is not by any means the first Commission on this subject that has been appointed. Some of your Lordships may have read, and if you have you will have read with very great interest and admiration, the Report of the Commission that was appointed about two years ago, of which the learned Judge, Sir Fitzjames Stephen, was Chairman, on the system under which the patterns of warlike stores are made and passed into Her Majesty's Service. That Report, to which I must refer, was not only one which is characterized by great ability, but it contains statements of the most serious nature. To that Commission was referred the question of corruption in certain cases. The Commissioners acquitted those who were charged with corruption, but they certainly pronounced an extremely heavy censure upon the Departments of Administration upon the ground of inefficiency. They went so far indeed as to imply, if not to say in so many words, that it is almost in present circumstances a chaotic system. They dwelt very much on the importance of decentralization, and I think everyone who has turned his attention to the subject will be prepared to admit that in that they were eminently right. But, if I understand rightly, the present position of affairs in the War Office, recent changes have been rather in the opposite direction. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War, in a speech made a short time since, expressed his intention of decentralizing in certain cases. My right hon. Friend has my hearty good wishes in that object, though I could desire that the decentralizing process were carried a good deal further than is apparently contemplated. I would ask your Lordships to consider for one moment what the position of the Secretary of State for War really is. He has to discharge a number of functions and duties which, physically and mentally, are absolutely beyond the scope of any living man. There are no less than five different capacities which he holds. First of all, he is a Cabinet Minister, which involves the careful consideration of the most important questions; secondly, he has to deal with questions in Parliament of a military character; thirdly, the whole of the Stores and the Ordnance pass under his review, and for them he is responsible; fourthly, the enormous question of fortifications comes under his charge; and lastly, he is responsible for the Estimates in their preparation and passage through Parliament. He is, moreover, in nine cases out of ten, a civilian, who has to learn his business when he goes to the War Office; he is constantly changing, and, therefore, cannot possibly secure anything like a continuity of military policy. Between 1881 and 1887 there have been no less than six Secretaries of State, or an average of one a year. What is the result of all this? It is the entire absence of responsibility on the part of individuals, running from top to bottom of our system. There are cutlasses which will not cut, swords that break, bayonets that bend, cartridges that jam, saddlery that is defective, and stores which are absolutely vicious and bad; and there are guns designed and ordered sometimes years and years before they ever come to their completion, or when they do, they are practically worthless. What the country complains of is that the responsibility cannot be fixed on any one person, or even on one part of the system, the consequence being that no individual is ever punished. I read with great interest the other day the statement of the Secretary of State for War. As to the coaling stations, my right hon. Friend frankly admitted that what I and others have been complaining of for so long was correct, and that at this moment, after eight or nine years of waiting, virtually none of those stations are in an adequately defensible condition. My right hon. Friend also promised the larger guns, and in this I hope the Secretary for War was not too optimistic in his calculations. Those large guns are almost the first and most pressing need. They have been promised for a very long time, but at this moment none of the large 9·2 in. type are mounted, at home or abroad. I do not blame any individual; but on the whole I think this position of affairs is scandalous. For years and years those guns have been promised, and year after year large sums of money have been spent, and yet at the end of all this time we are still without that which is considered to be essential. The only way of escape from the difficulty is to hand over the contracts to private firms. We are in terrible arrear. This country cannot be placed in these matters beside France, Germany, Italy, the United States, or even with some of our own Colonies, where the best of guns exist, which have been obtained from private manufacturres. I believe from what I have heard that at this moment the United States has a certain number of the 9·2 inch guns which we have never been able to procure. How far, then, is our administrative system and organization responsible for those great defects? A good many years ago, but not out of the recollection of many of your Lordships, the Ordnance Department was separated from the duties of the Secretary for War and of the Secretary for the Colonies as he then was, the two offices being conjoined in one Minister, who embraced the double functions of War Minister and Colonial Minister. The Master General was at the head of the Department. He was an officer of the highest rank and *status*; he was, so to speak, a permanent officer, and in many instances he sat in the Cabinet of the day, as in the case, among others, of Lord Hardinge and the Duke of Wellington. I have heard from many persons in former years of the great advantage derived to the Cabinet from the presence of the Duke of Wellington on all military questions. I think that was a wise plan, so far as it went; but at the time of the Crimean War, when our military arrangements were re-organized in great haste, and in circumstances of much confusion, the Ordnance Department was made a separate department. About 1869 the Surveyor-General's Department was created, the object being to have at the head of the Department to which was transferred the business of the Ordnance, not only an officer, but also, if possible, a Member of the House of Commons. But very soon the professional element dropped out, and a civilian was appointed. Since then, I believe that the great majority of Surveyors General have been civilians. And not only are they engaged in political life and continually changing, but they are under the influence of their so-called subordinates in the War Office. Here, again, is another instance of the want of responsibility on which I lay so much stress. Eight or nine years ago the Ordnance Committee was established. It was a body, partly composed of civilians and partly of officers; but inasmuch as it changes periodically, it is impossible to fix responsibility upon it. The chain of responsibility extends from the Secretary of State, through the Commander-in-Chief, the Director of the Ordnance Committee, the subordinate officers who have to deal with the branches of the business, down to the manufacturer. It is absolutely impossible when a gun bursts to fix the responsibility on one of the different persons or departments which I have enumerated. This means a very serious state of affairs, and yet it exists in nearly every branch of the Service. I will trouble your Lordships with but a single quotation, and that is very apt. In the Egyptian Campaign it was stated in the evidence before the Commission that—

> "Out of 110 shrapnell shell, 55 were found defective, some having no bursting charges, and others having the bursting charges wet. Out of a total of 398 shrapnell shells, 156 were found correct—that is, about 39 per cent; 125, portion of bursting charge gone—about 31 per cent; 61 empty—about 16 per cent; 30 damp—about 8 per cent; and 26 jammed—about 7 per cent."

The statement of Lord Wolseley upon that is as follows:—

> "April 13, 1885.
>
> "My Lord,—It is difficult for me to adequately describe the feelings with which I have read the inclosed papers describing the condition of the ammunition supplied from Woolwich to the only battery of Royal Artillery which accompanied the column recently operating from Korti across the Bayuda Desert. In all our small wars the British soldier has to contend against enemies vastly superior in number, and it is only by superior discipline and the efficiency of our arms of precision that we can secure victory. I have already addressed your Lordship on the subject of the carelessness shown by those responsible at home for the quality of the ammunition supplied to the troops in the field, in issuing star shells of a different calibre from that of the guns of the battery serving here. I trust the new proof contained in the inclosed papers of the culpable negligence of some branch of department at home will lead to an inquiry into its working by a board of selected officers of the line, unconnected in every way with the Woolwich manufacturing or store department, or with the administration under which they work. I write strongly because I feel strongly when I think of how the lives of gallant soldiers may have been sacrificed in the present campaign, and may be again so sacrificed in the future, through the inexcusable carelessness of individuals in the Woolwich Arsenal, and through the unsoundness of a system under which such ammunition as that described in these inclosures could possibly have been issued for service in the field.
>
> "I have, &c.,
>
> "WOLSELEY, General."

It is needless to comment upon that. Indeed, I should only weaken such a letter by doing so. Sir Fitzjames Stephen's Report summed up the opinion of the Commissioners as to the present defects in this particular weapon. They said that our system had no definite object, and no efficient head, and, lastly, no definite practical method of dealing with all those technical and scientific stores and implements which had to be dealt with. It is impossible to conceive a stronger or a more sweeping statement than that, and yet, as a matter of fact, I have never heard it contradicted or controverted in any way. If the state of things be as described, of course we are convicted of very great waste and inefficiency. Efficiency and economy generally go hand in hand, but our system is against both. No doubt, under our Parliamentary system we cannot have the vigour, the rapidity of action, and the mobility of foreign Governments. But, on the other hand, there are also great difficulties arising out of our management of that system, and the organization which we have created. For this we are responsible, and on these questions I hope the Commission of which I am inquiring will be able to make full and adequate recommendations. The Commissioners are so constituted that they ought to do so, but, on the other hand, we must always look in the main and in the end to Her Majesty's Government. They have, of course, the spending of this large sum of £18,000,000 a year. They have the real power and the real responsibility. I do not doubt their desire to do what is right, and I have not made these observations with the desire of casting blame on any individual. It is because I am impressed with the serious position of circumstances that I desire to call attention to some at least of the most important factors in this case, and to point out how great, in my opinion, is the evil, how great is the waste, how great is the danger, and how great is the need of someone finding a remedy with the least possible delay.

*THE EARL OF MORLEY: Before the noble Lord answers the question, I would ask the House to give me their patience for a few moments. My noble Friend has traversed the whole field of military administration, and though I agree with a great deal that has fallen from the noble Lord, I think that many of the faults in the system are not referable specially to War Office administration, but are really inherent in our Parliamentary government and administration. The noble Lord referred at length to the Report of the Commission over which Sir James Stephen presided. Able as the Report was in many particulars, I venture to differ entirely from the conclusions at which it arrived for the reform of our system of military administration. The re-introduction of the Ordnance Committee would, in my opinion, increase the confusion. I think it is essential to have a Secretary of State who should be responsible to Parliament for the Army Estimates and for all that depends upon them. I do not for a moment say that the War Office itself, or the manufacturing departments are perfect in organization, but many of the errors and misfortunes, referred to by the noble Lord cannot entirely be put down to faults of the system in the War Office itself. I think the noble Lord was rather misled as to the character of the Ordnance Committee, and his statements were calculated to mislead the House as to its functions. I always understood that that Committee, composed of the ablest Ordnance officers who could be found, and of eminent mechanical engineers, was a purely consultative committee which only made such experiments as it was requested to make by the Secretary of State or his Ordnance advisers. So far it is, no doubt, responsible for the Reports which it sends in to the Secretary of State. The noble Lord also spoke of the Surveyor General of the Ordnance. Certainly, I have some sympathy with the noble Lord when I consider what the office originally was, and what it eventually came to be. When it was instituted by Lord Northbrook in 1869 it was intended to be a technical and professional office to be held by a distinguished Ordnance officer. In my judgment, it is a great pity that that principle was departed from, and that it came to be a Parliamentary office. I believe that if we had had an officer of technical experience as adviser to the Secretary of State a great deal of evil would have been avoided, and much good would have been done. As to the latter part of the question, relating to the manufacture and production of guns, the noble Lord has hardly referred to it at all. I am not going to say for a moment that the delays have not been greater than they ought to have been; but here again the House and the country should draw a distinction between delays which are the result of bad administration and those which are the result of the conditions of manufacture. For the last few years we have been passing through an absolutely experimental stage in the manufacture of big guns, as regards their construction, as regards the material from which they are made, and as regards the powder which is to be used in them. As soon as one pattern is supposed to be perfect in all particulars, the inventive genius of some individual would suggest some improvement. There is no stability or permanence in the patterns, and to that is owing a great deal of the delay of which the noble Lord so justly complains. I agree with the noble Lord's remarks about obtaining guns by contract; but the noble Lord should remember the great difficulty that existed some years ago in finding private firms that could manufacture guns of great calibre. There was not more than one—if there was one—firm in the country which could produce satisfactorily the huge ingots of steel which were necessary for the construction of the big guns then made. This has been to a great extent corrected now, and no doubt the noble Lord opposite (Lord Harris) will tell the House what has been done in this direction. I hope the system of putting guns out to contract will be largely increased. Before I sit down I should like to know, though it is perhaps hardly fair to ask the noble Lord without notice, how far the recommendations of the Committee, over which I had the honour to preside, have been carried into effect? I refer to the Committee which inquired into the Manufacturing Departments of the Army, which sat at the same time as Sir Fitzjames Stephen's Commission. One great object of that Committee was to centre responsibility somewhere. One suggestion was that there should be one head of the Manufacturing Departments of the Army; another and most important suggestion was, that there should be an absolute divorce of inspection from manufacture. We attached great importance to the latter suggestion, and I should like to learn whether any steps have been taken to carry out the recommendation.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS): My Lords, the questions put to me by the noble Earl may be answered shortly. The noble Marquess who presided over the Commission referred to by the noble Earl hopes to be able to report about Easter. The second point referred to in the question was not, in the opinion of the noble Marquess, referred to the Commission, though they might probably deal with it incidentally. I quite feel that an answer as brief as that would not be respectful to your Lordships, and would not satisfy the noble Earl, but I was not quite prepared for the noble Earl's going back to the Report of the Commission two years ago, the report and recommendations of which had been fully dealt with. Before, however, dealing with that part of the noble Earl's speech, I would like to refer briefly to the death of Mr. Guy Dawnay, who, by the great experience gained in his hunting expeditions in South Africa, proved a most valuable officer in our South African campaigns. He was selected by the noble Marquess as Surveyor General of the Ordnance in 1885, and I am sure that all who came into contact with him will agree that it would be impossible to find a man more assiduous in his public duties, or more amiable as a friend. For two years or more Mr. Dawnay had been working with great success upon the completion of the new rifle, and if that rifle should fulfil the expectations formed of it, the result will be largely due to Mr. Dawnay. The noble Earl based his speech in great measure on the Report of the Commission now two years old. That Commission was appointed to consider the system of passing stores into the Service. It went somewhat further, and expressed an opinion that it would be desirable to re-establish such an official as the Master General of Ordnance. The noble Earl opposite has pointed out that it was the intention of Lord Northbrook that the office of Surveyor General of Ordnance should be held by a distinguished military man, but that Parliament was too strong for the noble Lord, and insisted upon having a political official. I quite agree that many of the difficulties in the administration of a great spending department like the War Office arise from our political system. The noble Earl expressed himself strongly in favour of decentralization, and did the fullest justice to Mr. Stanhope's efforts in that direction. I cannot, however, agree with all the noble Earl's illustrations of how such a system could be carried out. At the same time I hope that the system of decentralization initiated by Mr. Stanhope will be carried further, especially with regard to the supply of stores. What is wanted of the War Office, after all, is to make war well, and it would be an immense advantage if there were at particular places stations at which every variety of stores were collected, rather than having them all centralized at Woolwich. The noble Earl referred to the complaint made in the Report of Sir Fitzjames Stephen's Commission with respect to the star shells. My noble Friend opposite has dealt with that question, and shown that it arose from the mistake of an Ordnance Store officer at Alexandria or Cairo, and had nothing to do with the Ordnance Department at Woolwich. Then, again, there was the story of the shrapnell shells and the powder shrinking down below the cap. That was a grave mistake, undoubtedly, and one I do not wish to defend; but it must be remembered that those stores, before they got out to Egypt, passed through several transhipments, and underwent a great amount of jolting, which would account for the slipping of the powder below the cap. It was satisfactorily proved, on examination, that the shells had not been sent out from England without the bursting charge. Moreover, it is part of the drill of an Artillery officer, before he discharges his weapon, to see that the bursting charge is all right. Then the noble Lord has referred to the question of heavy guns. That is a most difficult technical question for a layman to take up; but there are one or two points which ought to be made known, because the public are under some little mistake as to the actual facts. This country adopted breech-loading ordnance long after France and Germany. The noble Earl believed he was justified in saying that we were far behind France in this matter. My belief is exactly the contrary. Though we were two or three years behind France in the adoption of the new type of breech-loading guns, I believe we are now, as regards the new type of steel breech-loading guns, considerably ahead of that country. The noble Earl has quoted occasionally from the Report of Sir Fitzjames Stephen's Commission. I, too, would like to quote a passage from the Report of the same Commission, because it bears directly on the question of heavy ordnance. In paragraph 446 the Report says—

> "We would direct particular attention in connection with this subject—[that is, the subject of the *Collingwood* gun]—to the evidence given by Sir Frederick Bramwell. He considers that there was some local defect in the material of which the gun was composed, and observes that the steel is of such a nature that fracture in it occasionally takes place which can be referred to no visible cause. This, if correct, is a great misfortune. It shows that large guns must, at present, be regarded as being to a greater or less extent experimental and speculative; but it is a misfortune from which all nations must suffer in common. We have reason to think that failures of a very serious character have occurred in both French and German guns, of which very little is allowed to be known."

The noble Lord will quite understand that I am not attempting for a moment to defend the delays that take place in completing the supply of guns; it is most deplorable that such a state of things should exist in a great manufacturing country like this; but the public should recognize that we took up the breechloading system later than either France or Germany; that in ten years we have entirely changed from the simple form of muzzle-loader to the complex form of breech-loader, from the old iron gun, first of all, to a steel tube with iron hoops, and, finally, to a steel tube with steel hoops, an immense change, especially with a treacherous material such as steel; and that, notwithstanding accidents which have occurred to guns of the new type, there have been none which have resulted in loss of life. Extraordinary advances have also been made in the descriptions of powder to be used. The gun is designed to take a certain charge, and experiments have to be conducted as to the exact charge and the kind of powder which is best adapted for the gun. It is the fact that during the last 10 years we have been in an experimental state. The Secretary of State in another place spoke the other night with hope as to the turn out of guns, but he was not prepared to pledge himself on the subject. After our experience in the past few years, no one would be justified in saying that he was absolutely certain that guns would be always waiting for ships instead of ships having to wait for guns. But quite recently there has been an important Report which leads one to hope that a point has been reached in the manufacturing of guns which will enable them to be produced more rapidly in future. As regards lining, that matter originated practically in 1886. An 8 in. gun fired 366 rounds, and the bore was then found to be so eroded by the action of the powder that the projectile no longer rotated. The gun was sent to Elswick and lined, and the experiment proved quite satisfactory; it proved that guns could be practically renewed and made efficient at a very small cost. That was the origin of the system of lining. It has been tried not only with the 8 in., but also with the 6 in. gun, and is equally successful. There seems to be some impression in the country that there are no new types of breechloading guns in the Services, but that is quite a mistake. In 1882 we had some 350 new type breechloading guns, almost entirely in the sea service; in 1886 we had about doubled the number, and we have now of all types either in the sea-going squadrons or in harbours, or in store, about 1,450 new type breechloading guns, and about 600 of these are 6 in. and upwards. With regard to the question of fixing responsibility upon an individual, I think the noble Earl will himself admit that there is some little difficulty in doing so where the design may be made by one person and the material by another. I should be inclined to think that, to some extent, there is responsibility for a design upon the Ordnance Committee, but it does not follow that, because a gun fails, the design is necessarily responsible, because it must be proved that there was absolutely no flaw whatever in the material before it can be proved that the design was at fault. Therefore I think the difficulties of fixing responsibility are not so light as the noble Earl seemed to think. With reference to the Report of the Committee presided over by the noble Earl opposite (Lord Morley), I may say that the actual recommendations of that Committee as regards the Ordnance factories have been carried out, and the factories—Woolwich, Parkhead, Enfield, Waltham—have all been placed under one head. The head of the Ordnance factory, indeed, is very much in the position of a private manufacturer, and is made actually responsible for the stores he issues. The department of the Director of Artillery now examines all stores issued to the Army, and if it chooses to reject them the person who supplies them is brought to book. In order to carry out this system it has been necessary to increase the strength of the Inspecting Department, but I believe the additional expenditure thus involved has been well laid out. Finally, as regards the storage of stores, the Secretary of State, as he has recently explained, has taken steps to put up store buildings in various parts of the country, in order that the stores requisite for particular bodies of troops may be decentralized and easily got at, and that we may not have the difficulty of dealing with an enormous mass of stores centralized in the central depôt at Woolwich. Although the Report of Sir Fitzjames Stephen's Commission, and that of my noble Friend (the Earl of Morley) were but two years old, a very great deal has been done to improve the system of administration in the Army. It would, in my opinion, be most unwise to interfere with the gradual progress of the improvements that are being effected, because the War Office has no doubt that they are beneficial, and that the system adopted must result in the supply to the Army of good material, and of an arm which will worthily stand the test in the hour of trial.

*THE EARL OF CARNARVON: The noble Lord has made a very good defence of that which it is his duty to defend; and if I do not quite agree with him in all his remarks, it is not for want of appreciation of the ability he has shown. I desire merely to point out that whilst the explanation he gave as to the star shells may be correct, the other charge which I quoted from the Report is not dealt with at all. The defects in the shrapnel shells were not due to any manipulation at Cairo and Alexandria, but to mistakes made before the stores left Woolwich. My noble Friend quoted against me a paragraph from this Report, from the evidence of Sir Frederick Bramwell, to the effect that

> "In the present condition of steel, fractures continually take place, and can be referred to no visible cause."

My hon. Friend should have read also the next paragraph, in which the Commissioners sum up their opinion, as apart from that of Sir Frederick Bramwell, in the sentence—

> "Such results from the manufacture of guns can hardly be considered satisfactory."

THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE: The noble Lord has referred to the recent changes in the system of administration of the Army, which, we trust, will lead to no inconsiderable results. I am not sure, however, that down to the present the results of the examination of arms have been as satisfactory as we could wish. In reference to the Egyptian Campaign, the country must remember that in time of war, when a good deal of rough work is going on, it is quite natural that accidents should happen. It is, therefore, not quite reasonable to say, because a weapon is broken, that therefore it was due to bad manufacture. It is utterly unreasonable, because of these unavoidable accidents, to blame the Department, although, at the same time, it is only right that faults of this kind should be carefully looked into, and I believe that the steps now being taken will add very much to the security which will be felt in the equipment of our forces. I feel with the noble Earl the great disadvantage of having so many guns unfinished, but the fact is that the extraordinary march of intelligence under which we are now living produces every day some new invention, some new experiment, both in regard to the steel of which the weapon is made and with regard to the powder that is used. Noble Lords have no idea of the delicacy of these heavy guns. The enormous charge alone makes it essential that the greatest care should be taken, because the strongest feeling would arise if any accident occurred whereby life was lost. That circumstance naturally makes the manufacturers doubly careful about the arms which are to be placed in position and in the hands of the troops. We must look for delay, therefore, in preparing those heavy weapons. I feel very much, however, that we want them, and the sooner we get them the better I think it will be. The Secretary of State for War and I are anxious that they should be prepared as rapidly as possible, and the Secretary of State has done everything to hasten their manufacture. The difficulties, however, are found to be very great. But I do not believe that the delay is the fault of the Departments, or of the system under which we at present administer those Departments.

LORD HARRIS: I think the noble Earl will be glad to learn that there are guns of larger size than those he referred to actually already in position. I admit that there is delay in regard to the 9-in. guns, but there are, as a matter of fact, 29 12-in. guns mounted, and a considerable number of those are in the land service.

TRUST COMPANIES BILL.—(No. 10.)

SECOND READING.

LORD HOBHOUSE: My Lords, since this matter was first before your Lordships a year ago there has been no alteration in the substance or the merits of the case, and therefore I do not propose to take up your time with any long argument in support of the position that the present system of individual trusteeships is fraught with evil both to trustees and beneficiaries, and that it is most desirable that there should be some change in the law. The suggested remedy has been tested for a long time over a wide field of experience. It has been applied in the United States, Canada, South Africa, and in the Australasian Colonies—in countries where the English system, the French system, and the Dutch system of trusts prevail; and it has been found equally successful in all, from which I infer that it is suited to the wants of active and commercial communities. The suggestion is that solid companies should be formed for the purpose of discharging the duties which are now discharged by individuals. I am not asking for any alteration in the law of joint stock companies, nor am I asking for any alteration in the law of trusts. On the contrary, I propose that corporate trustees should be under the same duties and obligations as individual trustees are now. But, by our law, a trustee cannot receive any profit on account of his trust unless the founder of the trust has so declared in express terms; and either by law or by inveterate practice—I hardly know which — corporations cannot be appointed to various fiduciary positions. What, therefore, is wanted is an alteration of those two rules of law, because, unless they are altered, it is clear that a very long time must elapse before new trusts are created, and even then the field of operation must be imperfect, on account of the offices to which corporations cannot be appointed. The Bill is framed with these objects. One group of clauses provides for such an alteration of the law as will enable companies to carry on business to a substantial extent—that is to say, receiving payment for the offices which they fulfil. There is another group of clauses addressed to the security of the public, in order to guard against there being bubble companies. It is provided that the subscribed capital shall be a large amount —£100,000 is mentioned in the Bill —half of which should be deposited in Court, in order to be security for the customers. The companies are to render regular accounts to the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, and any person who desires to satisfy himself of their condition may do so by applying to the Board of Trade to appoint an Inspector to overhaul the books, and the Board of Trade may, if it see fit, require an increase in the deposit. It is provided that the companies shall be under the same liabilities as those under which individual trustees now are, and that the officers shall be liable, by way of contempt and so forth, for breaches of duty by the companies themselves. The Bill has been carefully prepared, after the study of a great number of Acts in the United States and the Colonies for the creation of such companies. It is new, and runs a good deal into details. It is one of those measures wherein skilled heads may be able to detect many faults and suggest many improvements. With this object, I would suggest that, at a later stage, the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. My Lords, I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª"—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I do not think there is anything that can properly be urged against the principle of the Bill as I understand it; but I think it is very desirable that the principle of the Bill should be understood. In respect to one commercial company—from South Africa I believe—there was an effort to do that which I do not believe any of your Lordships or any English lawyer would recognize as a proper thing to do—namely, to permit them to treat the trust fund as a thing out of which they could make profit. I can understand the propriety of paying trustees—whether a company or individuals—but I would not consent to give any company the power to make a profit out of the trust funds. By the 18th section of this Bill my noble Friend preserves all the liabilities that a trustee would be under when a company becomes a trustee. I would suggest that, in addition to this, the directors should be themselves under personal liability in respect of the company. I do not find that exact security in the Bill, and I am convinced that it is one that is required. These are matters which require careful examination by skilled lawyers, and therefore I hope that after being read a second time the Bill will be referred to a small Select Committee.

LORD HERSCHELL: I entirely agree with the objects of this Bill, and heartily support the Motion for its Second Reading. I think the better plan would be to refer the Bill to one of the new Standing Committees. The Standing Committees have power under the Standing Orders to refer any particular measure to a small Sub-Committee. I should be sorry to see any unnecessary multiplications of Select Committees to do work which I hope is going to be efficiently done by the Standing Committees.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS LEGISLATION.

LORD NORTON: I beg to ask Her Majesty's Government if it may be hoped that the promised Bill for consolidating and amending the Acts on Reformatory and Industrial Schools will be introduced in this House soon, before our time is more engaged?

EARL BROWNLOW: I had hoped to lay the Reformatory Bill on the Table of the House before this, but some technical difficulties prevented my doing so. However, I shall have it ready to lay before the House on Monday. The Industrial Schools Bill I hope to be able to lay on the Table in a very few days afterwards. Although they are presented at different times, I think it will be convenient to have both Bills before us for consideration at the same time.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 29th March, 1889.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners:—

The House went;—and being returned;—

Mr. Speaker reported the Royal Assent to,—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1.) Act, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the employment by a husband of his wife in a factory or workshop which is not classed as a domestic factory or workshop in "The Factory and Workshop Act, 1878," is employment as defined in Section 94 of that Act?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): The hon. Gentleman asks me a question of law on which it would not be proper for me to give an opinion. If he knows of any case in which he considers that a wife is employed by her husband contrary to the provisions of the Statute, it is open to him to test the question by instituting a prosecution. I may inform him that the Inspector of Factories did some time since prosecute a man before the stipendiary at Manchester for employing his wife, but the case was dismissed on the ground of the relationship between the parties.

ARREARS OF RENT.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether in cases in which landlords obtained Chairmen's decrees for only one half year's rent, a second half year's rent not being yet due, he would grant the aid of the forces of the Crown; whether he was aware that Mr. George A. Moore, of Moorehall, county Mayo, is now taking proceedings against tenants, one half-year's rent only being due; and if he will endeavour to discountenance such conduct on the part of landlords?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): The hon. Member is misinformed. I understand that in no case is Mr. G. A. Moore taking proceedings against tenants for the recovery of one half-year's rent only.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I have in my pocket a process issued by Mr. Moore for half a year's rent.

IRISH PRISON RULES.

Mr. PETER M'DONALD (Sligo, N.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether it was true that Mr. M'Hugh, ex-Mayor of Sligo, now undergoing a sentence of six months' imprisonment, with hard labour, in Derry Gaol, for an offence under the Press Clauses of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, was for five weeks deprived of his privilege, according to prison rules, of writing any letter, for no cause other than that he was confined to hospital; whether, when eventually allowed to write a letter to his wife, the Governor refused to forward it and confiscated it on his own authority; and, whether the rules permit an appeal to the Prisons Board by a prisoner against the decision of the Governor; and, if so, why was this right denied to Mr. M'Hugh?

Mr. MADDEN: A Report has not yet been received, and I will ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question until Monday.

LOANS TO IRISH LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

Mr. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) asked the Secretary to the Treasury if he could state the number and amount of loans sanctioned to landlords and tenants in Ireland during six months ending 1888, under Land Improvement Acts; and, the number of inspectors employed in reporting on works undertaken in pursuance of the said loans, and the total amount of salaries paid to such inspectors?

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): Thr numbers and amounts of the loans unde the three heads referred to are:—Lan Law (Section 31), 209, £19,105; Land Law (Section 19), 3, £350; Land Improvement, 69, £19,900—total, 281, £39,350. The number of inspectors now employed is 17 ordinary inspectors at £300 a-year each, and one chief inspector at £500—total, £5,600. I should perhaps explain that, in addition to preliminary inspections and reports before the above loans were granted and to progress inspections of the works undertaken in consequence of these loans, the inspectors have also to inspect works in progress in respect of loans granted prior to the six months referred to in the hon. Member's question.

THE POLICE IN DONEGAL.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether he had seen the following statements printed in the *Daily News* of 26th March, and made by that paper's Special Commissioner in Donegal—

> "One cottage I went into where I found an old woman whose only son had fled. . . . . She told me, through an interpreter, how the police had searched her place, and how one of them seized her by the shoulder and shook her when she refused to give him information. He threatened she should have handcuffs put upon her if she persisted in her refusal. . . . . I saw a man whose case, I believe, has already been referred to. The police had pursued him, and as he continued to fly they had fired at him repeatedly. He fled to the water's edge, and was there taken. He stated that one of the men who arrested him pointed a revolver at him, and threatened to shoot him unless he told which way his companions had gone. He declared that he did not hear the call to surrender. . . . . A poor woman had her cottage searched both before and after her confinement, the policeman, I was assured, getting up as she lay there to overhaul the top of her bedstead."

Whether in view of the feeling in the district he would at once cause inquiries to be made into all the circumstances of the case; and whether he could state under what authority the police have acted in the manner described?

Mr. MADDEN: The statements in the *Daily News* to which this question calls attention appear to be for the most part without foundation. The allegation as to the case of the old woman is, so far as can be ascertained, unfounded. As regards the man, he was not only not fired at repeatedly, but, as already stated in this House, not at all, two shots only having been fired by the sergeant when the man was running away to evade arrest, and these shots were fired not at the man, but as signals. The revolver was not pointed at him when arrested, nor was he threatened to be shot. The local officer has failed to find any foundation for the allegation with regard to the overhauling of the top of a bedstead under the circumstances indicated. The police are reported as being uniformly considerate in carrying out the duty in question, and the searches for the suspected murderers have been conducted so as to entail as little inconvenience as is compatible with the bounden duty of the police.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: Is it the fact that the police paid two visits to a house at night, one of them two or three days before the poor woman who occupied it was confined, and the other two or three days afterwards; that they walked over the bed in which she was lying, that they turned up the bed in which the children were lying, and that they held a gun over a girl 13 years of age while they questioned her? And may I ask further why these police visits cannot take place in the daytime?

Mr. MADDEN: I have no further information than that which I have already given.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Will the hon. and learned Gentleman be prepared by Monday next to give a categorical reply to the question?

Mr. MADDEN: Yes; if the right hon. Gentleman will put one down upon the paper. I have already answered the question which appears on the paper to-day.

HACKNEY CARRIAGES.

Mr. BAIRD (Glasgow, Central) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have instructed their officials that "a carriage used for the conveyance of passengers at separate fares does not fall within the definition of a hackney carriage as set forth in Section 4 of 'The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1888;'" whether "hackney carriage," according to that definition, means any carriage standing or plying for hire; and, whether, in order to remove all grounds for dispute as to this point, he will consent to include all hackney carriages in the definition?

***The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER** (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am advised that a carriage used for the conveyance of passengers at separate fares is not a hackney carriage within the terms of the Inland Revenue Act of 1888. If that advice is correct, it is, of course, not possible to extend the term "hackney carriage" so as to cover such vehicles without legislation. It is not for me to take the initiative in any such proposal. After Monday next the proceeds of the carriage tax cease to go to the Exchequer, and become part of the revenue of the County Councils. The Government wish it to be clearly understood that with regard to this and all the other transferred licence duties, the

County Councils now stand between the Government and the public. Any proposal for changes in these duties must first be addressed to the County Councils, and the Government cannot take action in such matters, vitally affecting as they do the finance of the County Councils, unless it is approached through them.

IRELAND—FAIR RENTS.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, N.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether it was a fact that a number of applications to have a fair rent fixed were listed by tenants on the estate of Colonel Fortescue, in the parish and county of Louth in 1887, and remain unheard; and, whether a number of evictions were now threatened on this estate; and, if so, whether he can do anything to hasten the hearing of the cases, and to suspend evictions in the meantime?

MR. MADDEN: The Land Commissioners report that the number of the applications to have fair rents fixed on the estate of Colonel Fortescue is 12. A Sub-Commission commenced its sittings in County Louth last September, and a new list of cases from that county will be issued in a week or two. It appears that two evictions are pending on the estate, but in one of these cases the tenants actually have a judicial rent which was fixed in 1882, and in the other the tenant holds under a reduced rent agreed upon between him and the landlord.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention had been called to the fact that at a recent special general meeting of delegates of the Royal Liver Friendly Society the following rule was passed:—

> "If any member should act in a manner which, in the opinion of the Committee of Management, is hurtful to the interests and well-being of the Society, the Committee of Management shall intimate in writing to the said member, warning him against such conduct; and if, after such notice, such member still persists in such conduct, the full Committee of Management shall, after calling him before them, or giving him an opportunity of attending before the Committee, have power to expel him from the Society, and thenceforth after such expulsion his interest or benefit in the Society shall cease."

Whether this rule has been registered; if not, whether it has been sent to the Registrar for registration; and, whether it is now under consideration, or whether registration has been refused?

MR. JACKSON: I am informed that a complete amendment of rules understood to contain the regulation referred to in the honourable Member's question was received at the office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies this morning, but was returned for the correction of an informality.

SCOTTISH FISHERY BOARD.

*MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether a strong recommendation from the Scottish Fishery Board was received at the Treasury in December last in favour of an immediate increase of the salaries and travelling subsistence allowances of the officers of the Board commensurate with the heavy additional work laid upon them in recent years, which they have been carrying on without the smallest remuneration; and, if so, what are the intentions of the Government in the matter?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Buteshire): A communication to the effect indicated in the right hon. Member's question was received by the Secretary for Scotland from the Fishery Board on the 24th December last. The correspondence on the subject with the Fishery Board which was found necessary made it impossible to submit the proposals to the Treasury in time for the Estimates of 1889-90. The matter is being carefully considered by the Secretary for Scotland who will refer it to the Treasury as soon as he is in a position to do so.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA—MR. LEAKE.

MR. LANE (Cork County, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, is there no information in the Colonial Office of Chief Justice Onslow's having applied for and obtained leave of absence from the Colony of Western Australia; has the Colonial Office made any inquiry into the very grave imputations made (upon affidavits) by leading Colonists in Western Australia against the official conduct of Mr. Leake while adjudicating on the Bench, since those affidavits were lodged with the Secretary of State last year; and, whether, under the circumstances, the Secretary of State will intimate to Governor Broome that Mr. Leake should not be appointed to a judicial position in that Colony until those charges and allegations be proved to be unfounded?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, Toxteth): Chief Justice Onslow is reported to have applied for leave of absence, but it is not known whether he has obtained it. As I stated yesterday, the allegations alluded to by the hon. Member have been referred to the Governor, who has not yet reported upon them. Without admitting that the imputations if substantiated are of such gravity as to disqualify Mr. Leake from holding a judicial appointment, it must be manifest that the Secretary of State cannot give such instructions as the hon. Member suggests until he has heard both sides.

THE "FROG'S MARCH."

MR. PICKERSGILL asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he would issue a Police Order prohibiting the use of what is known as the "frog's march" as a means of conveying a prisoner to the station? It would probably save time if the right hon. Gentleman would say whether he had yet received the Medical Report in the case of Samuel Mahoney?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am not prepared to prohibit altogether the use of what is called the "frog's march," which is had recourse to only when it is absolutely necessary, in order to enable the police to convey to the station exceptionally violent, drunken, or disorderly men. The Commissioner of Police would be glad to receive any practicable suggestion as to any safer way in which the police can perform their duties under such exceptional circumstances.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): Would it not be possible to employ a stretcher in such cases?

MR. MATTHEWS: It would be perfectly possible to employ a stretcher, but I doubt whether great violence might not have to be used to get the man down.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): By the use of a stretcher, all the danger following on the "frog's march" would be avoided.

MR. MATTHEWS: I can only repeat the assurance that the Chief Commissioner would be glad to receive and consider any practical suggestions on the subject.

MR. PICKERSGILL: I beg to give notice that on an early opportunity I will call further attention to the matter.

THE POLICE AND EVICTIONS.

MR. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, at an advanced hour on Wednesday night, a force of police accompanied a body of emergency men to the scene of the recent evictions of the Clongorey tenants, and remained there while the agent and emergency men destroyed by fire the roofs of 12 of the tenants' houses, and levelled the walls with crowbars?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I have not yet received any Report.

ARMY COMMISSIONS.

MR. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Secretary of State of War if he could state when the result of the last Militia Competition Examination for Commissions in the Army was likely to be known, as already a fortnight has elapsed since the examination?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The result of the examinations will not be known before the 11th of April.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether, to obtain due consideration of the question of the condition of the poor in large towns, in respect of which the Motion of the hon. Member for Nottingham stands first on Tuesday next, he will refrain from puttng down Government Business for a Morning Sitting of the House on that day?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am aware of the importance attached to this matter by hon. Gentlemen; and I am most anxious that it should proceed to a most ample discussion in this House. But I must remind the hon. Member that the House has virtually appropriated Tuesday mornings to Supply, until Supply is finished, unless urgent Government Business intervenes; and I should not be justified in asking the House to forgo that Order under all the circumstances of the case. But I am of opinion that a condensed debate is more satisfactory in such a matter than a discursive one that may extend over the whole evening, although I admit that the subject is one of great importance.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, under these circumstances, he will not, as the Government have taken the Morning Sitting, do his best to secure the attendance of hon. Members at 9 o'clock?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Certainly, I will endeavour to do that, and I hope to be in my place myself.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): Let me point out that the Order as to Morning Sittings only goes up to Easter.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I accept the correction. It may be necessary to make further arrangements after Easter.

MINING ROYALTIES.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can now state the terms of the reference which he will propose for the Royal Commission on Mining Royalties; and how soon he proposes that it shall be constituted and commence its labours?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir; I am not in a position to state the terms of reference now.

MR. CONYBEARE: When will the right hon. Gentleman be able to state them?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry that at present I am unable to say.

WESTMINSTER HALL.

MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid) asked the First Commissioner of Works whether he can estimate the cost of removing the closed-up dormer windows, and replacing the appropriate beams in the east slope of the roof of Westminster Hall, in the same manner as has been recently done in the west slope of the said roof; the cost of filling the empty niches with statuary outside of the north and principal entrance of Westminster Hall in the same manner as has been recently done with the pinnacle at the south end of the said Hall at the back of the St. Stephen's entrance; the cost of filling the great north window of Westminster Hall with heraldic or pictured stained glass in the same manner as has been done with the great south window of the said Hall; the cost of filling the lateral windows of Westminster Hall with mixed coloured and white transparent glass in the same manner as the windows of the ancient cloisters adjoining the said Hall have been treated; the cost of painting and gilding the shields borne by the carved angels in the roof of Westminster Hall in the same manner as the shields in the House of Lords; and the cost of filling the three empty arched spaces of the Great Central Hall of the Palace of Westminster with mosaic pictures in the same style as the completed Mosaic of St. George, by Mr. Poynter, R.A., in the said Central Lobby?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): The cost of removing the dormer windows on the eastern side of the roof of the hall and effecting the necessary repair of the timbers would be about £750. The cost of filling the niches referred to at the north end of the Hall would be several thousand pounds, varying according to design and execution. The statues should not be provided until a decision is arrived at as to the suggested additions to the towers. The cost of filling the great north window of the Hall with stained glass would probably be about £,1500, and of filling the central windows with mixed coloured and transparent glass, about £750—together, £2,250. The cost of repainting and gilding the shields in the roof would be about £125. The cost of the mosaic now in the Central Hall was £665. The remaining three would consequently cost about £2,000.

MR. DE LISLE: Considering the enormous sum which has been spent upon these buildings, will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that some provision will be made in next year's Estimates for completing the work in Westminster Hall?

*MR. PLUNKET: No, Sir; I cannot make a promise.

ALLEGED ASSAULT.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) asked the Lord Advocate whether it was the case that in action, Matheson against Cormack, presently pending in the Sheriff Court of Caithness, at Wick, for damages for serious personal injuries sustained in connection with an alleged assault by the defender Cormack upon the pursuer Matheson, the Procurator Fiscal for the County of Caithness is acting as private agent for the defender Cormack; whether the alleged assault was, or still may be, the subject of investigation by the Procurator Fiscal; whether the Procurator Fiscal has obtained the usual precognitions for the Crown in such cases; and whether he will advise the Procurator Fiscal to abstain from acting in defence of a private party sued for damages in defence of an alleged criminal assault which has been, or may be, the subject of investigation or trial on behalf of the Crown, especially where, as in this case, the Procurator Fiscal is in the possession and knowledge of the precognitions taken on behalf of the Crown?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: On 17th December information was lodged by Matheson of an alleged assault by Cormack. The Procurator Fiscal precognosced the three persons named by Matheson and found that the complaint was groundless. More than two months after Mr. Leith was professionally employed in the action mentioned in the question. As Mr. Leith is not precluded by the terms of his appointment from engaging in private practice, his conduct does not appear to me to be open to observation.

MR. CALDWELL: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the subject on the Estimates.

SUGAR BOUNTIES.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is correctly reported to have stated that the bounties given by France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Holland, amount to nearly £9,000,000 a year, and that these bounties are mainly given for the purpose of enabling their sugar producers to supply the English market; does the Convention propose not only that this bounty shall be abolished, but that we shall also exclude from our market all sugar coming from countries which do not adhere to the rules prescribed by the Convention; and has any calculation been made as to the effect the abolition of this subsidy, coupled with the exclusion of a large number of large sugar-producing countries from our market, will have upon the price of sugar?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: In answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I stated at Greenock the amount of the bounties given by France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Holland. I did not say, as suggested by the hon. Member, that these bounties were mainly given for the purpose of enabling the sugar producers to supply the English market: I expressed the opinion that the effect of such bounties was most injurious, and might prove absolutely destructive to our Home and Colonial sugar industry. With regard to paragraph 2, I must refer the hon. Member to the Convention itself, which he will find in the Blue Book, C. 5577, recently presented to Parliament. As regards paragraph 3, any calculation attempted to be made on the basis suggested by the hon. Member would be entirely misleading, inasmuch as it must be founded upon two incorrect assumptions. First, that the bounties go to the consumer in this country; and, second, that a "large number of large sugar-producing countries" would be excluded from our market. Moreover, it is impossible now to estimate accurately the great increase of our Colonial production and Home trade which must result from the abolition of foreign bounties.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Arising out of that answer, I wish to know whether the Board of Trade was consulted on the question referred to in the concluding part of the question?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The whole question is one which relates entirely to the Foreign Office, with whom International Conventions rest.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I wish to know if the Foreign Office is the authority to which the House should look for information as to the effect of bounties on an article of consumption; and whether it is not the published opinion of the Board of Trade that the effect of such a Convention would materially raise the price of sugar?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): There was a Report published some years ago by the Board of Trade containing an opinion on this subject with which I do not agree. My opinion is that this Convention will not materially raise the price of sugar.

MR. GLADSTONE: (Mid Lothian): I should like to ask, if the Convention is not to raise the price of sugar, why the Colonies are, as the right hon. Gentleman has told us, to send us largely increased quantities of sugar in consequence of the Convention?

SIR M. H. BEACH: It appears to me to be a matter for argument and debate.

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS:

MR. CONYBEARE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether boys were taken to Reformatory Schools with handcuffs on; and, if so, whether he would order the practice to be discontinued?

MR. MATTHEWS: There is no fixed rule on the subject. It is left to the discretion of the governor of the prison, who is responsible for the safe conduct of the boy. In crowded thoroughfares and at railway stations it is often found necessary to put on handcuffs in order to prevent escapes, which have not infrequently occurred. I do not think it would be expedient to issue an order prohibiting the practice altogether.

REGISTRATION AGENTS.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the President of the Board of Trade whether it was the fact that a Mr. Mowle, of Ashford, Kent, was recently appointed Receiver in Bankruptcy; whether at the time of such appointment he was the Conservative Registration Agent, and resigned that post on his appointment as Receiver; whether his partner, Mr. Brocher, had since been appointed the Conservative Registration Agent in his stead; and whether it was recognized to be consistent with his position that a Receiver's partner should carry on the work of a Party Registration Agent?

*SIR M. H. BEACH: I believe the statements in the first three paragraphs of the question are correct, except that I am informed that Mr. Brocher is not Mr. Mowle's partner, but is employed in his office, and that his employment is only temporary, to complete work begun by Mr. Mowle. I do not think he should hold the appointment permanently, and I shall address a communication to Mr. Mowle to that effect.

TELEGRAPHISTS.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the Postmaster General whether he had received a petition, signed by 690 Telegraphists of the Central Telegraph Office, praying for the abolition of the present unequal and inconvenient method of payment, and for the substitution therefor of the former method of equal and fortnightly payments which prevailed for 18 years; and whether he is prepared to grant the prayer of the petitioners; and, if not, why not?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The petition to which the hon. Member refers was addressed, not to me, but to the Controller of the Central Telegraph Office. It bears the signatures of 697 persons out of 1,475. These officers are in receipt of yearly salaries, which, in accordance with the practice prevailing generally throughout the Department, are payable monthly, but, as a matter of convenience to the recipients in this case, an instalment of the salary is paid in the middle of every month. I am not able to authorize the re-introduction of a method, the continuance of which was forbidden by the Treasury on the ground that it resulted in payments in excess of the salaries to which the officers concerned were entitled.

CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it was the fact that there was once a fund, called the Superannuation Fund, to which all Civil Servants were compelled to subscribe, and that this fund was eventually absorbed by the Treasury on the understanding that pensions would in future be granted to Civil Servants out of the Consolidated Fund; what the fund amounted to when absorbed by the Treasury; and what has become of it?

*MR. GOSCHEN: In answer to the 5th consecutive question put by the hon. Member, I have to say—["Oh!" *and* "Withdraw."] I cannot withdraw the fact that it is the fifth consecutive question, and that it is one of a group of eight questions which appear in the name of the hon. Member. In reply I have to inform him that a small fund of this character existed between 1821 and 1824, when it was abolished and the contributors were repaid. The hon. Member, however, doubtless refers to the deductions from salaries instituted in 1829 under Treasury Minute, confirmed and extended by Section 27 of the Superannuation Act of 1834, and abolished in 1857. The sums so deducted were applied in reduction of the Superannuation Vote up to 1848-49 inclusive, and from 1849 to 1857 they were annually paid into the Exchequer. Thus, there never existed anything which could be called a "Superannuation Fund," or the amount of which could be stated; but the whole amount deducted was applied, directly or indirectly, in reduction of the charge upon the taxes for pensions payable between 1829 and 1857.

MR. CONYBEARE: As I have not been able to hear the greater part of the right hon. Gentleman's answer, I beg to give notice that when I have had an opportunity of studying it in the *Times* I may put to him a sixth question, and, if necessary, a seventh or eighth.

TITHE DISTRAINTS IN CARDIGANSHIRE.

MR. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he was in a position to state the sources from which the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire derived the information that the peasants of Penbryn had determined to resist and ill-use the bailiffs employed to levy tithe distraints there on the 19th of March; and whether in the Reports made to the Home Office, any account is given of the use of batons by the police upon women and children before there were any signs of riot?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Chief Constable informs me that he received the information in question from many sources, among others from the Superintendent of Police of the district, and from a local constable. He informs me that no complaint was made to him at any time that any woman or child had been struck by the police, and he saw nothing of the kind occur.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea Town): Was any attempt made to get the information from sources independent of the police?

MR. MATTHEWS: No.

An hon. MEMBER: When was the information asked for?

MR. MATTHEWS: I cannot give the date.

METROPOLITAN OMNIBUS SERVICES

MR. COCHRANE-BAILLIE (St. Pancras, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it was in the power of the Chief Commissioner of Police to regulate the omnibus services; and, if so, whether he would give instructions for the discontinuance of the running of omnibuses along South and North Audley Streets, the former of the two streets being already inadequate for the present traffic, and the alternative route by Park Lane being but a little longer distance?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Commissioner of Police has been advised on a former occasion that it is not in his power to regulate omnibus services in the manner suggested by my hon. Friend (whom I beg to refer to the concluding proviso in Section 11 of the 30 and 31 Vic., c. 134) even in streets within the special limits of that Act. The streets named in the question are not within the special limits.

IRELAND—THE POLICE AND THE PARNELLITE INDEMNITY FUND.

MR. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, on Sunday, the 9th of December last, at Tibohine, Frenchpark, county Roscommon, two constables of the Royal Irish Constabulary, named Burns and M'Loughlin, interfered with a public collection in aid of the fund for the defence of the Irish Members which was in progress outside the gate of the Catholic church, collared and jostled those engaged in the collection, called on them to desist, threatened them with prosecution, took down the names of collectors and subscribers, and seized by force the subscription lists, and refused to give them back; whether Constable M'Loughlin, on asking what the collection was for, and being told that it was for the Parnell Indemnity Fund, said, "I cannot allow you to collect; you know it is illegal in a proclaimed district;" and Constable Burns added "you know you cannot collect money in a proclaimed district no matter for what purpose;" whether, eventually, upon the constables threatening to disperse the people, and one of them drawing his baton, the collection was given up, and the promoters of it requested the people to disperse, in order to avoid a disturbance; whether the lists headed "Parnell Indemnity Fund," and seized by the constables, have since been returned; whether, on a subsequent date, the constable who had seized and taken away the lists, on being asked to return them, said he did not know where they were, but that the sergeant might know, and the sergeant, being applied to, referred to the district inspector (Feely), and reported that the lists were in the hands of the Government; whether the lists will now be returned; what notice will be taken of the course pursued by the constables; and whether the police will be instructed that they are not entitled by law, in any part of Ireland, to interfere with collections for the fund in question?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the constables mentioned were on duty on the occasion in question, and observed a large crowd on the road, and persons paying money to the man who had been secretary to the branch of the National League, which had been suppressed in that district as an unlawful association. They inquired of him the object, and were referred to the papers. Constable M'Loughlin then took two pages of a copybook containing some memoranda informing the apparent promoters that if the meeting did not prove to be illegal the papers would be safe. It is not the case that the constables collared or jostled anybody, or called upon the people to desist, or that either of them drew his baton or threatened anyone with prosecution, nor did either declare a collection in the district to be illegal, nor threaten to disperse the people, nor did any other person advise the people to disperse, while, as a matter of fact, the collection was only interrupted by the people entering the chapel for Mass, and was resumed and completed on their coming out. It is the case that one of the collectors was subsequently referred to the District Inspector for the two copybook pages; but up to the present no application has been made to him for them. Should such an application be made, it will be at once replied to. The police are reported to have acted *bonâ fide* in the discharge of their duty, and in no case would they interfere with collections for the fund unless they had reason to believe that the law was at the same time being violated.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish clearly to understand whether the lists, which were illegally impounded, have been returned; and if the police, who have acted under a misapprehension, will be instructed that collections for this indemnity fund are not illegal in any part of Ireland?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The collections are perfectly legal, and the Government have no desire to interfere with them.

IRELAND—THE ARREST OF FATHER FARRELLY.

Mr. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the warrant for the arrest of the Rev. Laurence Farrelly, of Arklow, was placed in the hands of the police; whether Father Farrelly wrote to County Inspector Cruise, on the 21st of last month, stating that he would be at hand whenever wanted; was any reply sent by the County Inspector, or any one on his behalf; why Father Farrelly might not have been arrested any day since the issue of the warrant at his house, or in the streets of the town of Arklow; why the police, omitting for so many weeks to execute the warrant, adopted at length the mode of advancing in force upon Father Farrelly's house before daybreak, broke down the wall of the house, burst open doors, and did considerable damage to the reverend gentleman's property; whether it is held that the police had legal authority to break down the wall of the house in order to effect an entrance; and, if so, can such authority be defined; and whether the Irish Government will instruct the police not to break down houses, or burst doors open at night, for the purpose of effecting arrests under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, when such arrests can be effected in the ordinary course by day?

Mr. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.) also asked whether it was the fact that the reverend gentleman had been performing his duties openly day by day since the warrant was issued several weeks ago; and what was the object of postponing the execution of the warrant for such a length of time?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The information obtained from the locality as to the arrest of Father Farrelly is still incomplete, but I will give the right hon. Gentleman all that I have in my possession. The warrant for the arrest of Father Farrelly was placed in the hands of the police on the 20th or 21st ult. Fathers Farrelly and Clarke wrote a joint letter on the 21st of last month, professing their readiness to be arrested. In the case of Father Clarke, as is well known, no such readiness was, as a matter of fact, shown. The police had ground for thinking that resistance would be also made by Father Farrelly to arrest, and his house appears to have been barricaded on the occasion when the police went to arrest him. I understand that the police had legal authority under such circumstances to use force to effect an entrance into the house to take a prisoner into custody, but, of course, the Irish Government are extremely anxious that all arrests of whatever nature and for whatever offence should be effected with the least inconvenience to all parties concerned and with the least danger of disturbing the public peace. I am not able to answer the third paragraph, but with regard to the fourth and fifth paragraphs my information is imperfect, though I understand that the police believed that Father Farelly was unwell and that the execution of the warrant was delayed on that account.

MR. SEXTON: Is it the fact that this gentleman wrote to the County Inspector on the 21st of February, stating that he was ready to receive the warrant, and why was it that the warrant was allowed to remain in the hands of the police for five weeks before it was executed; is it not the fact that Father Farrelly has been continually in the town, and might have been arrested on any day; and, as he went voluntarily to the police, will the unnecessary damage which has been committed to the reverend gentleman's property be made good?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe that Father Farrelly wrote a joint letter with Father Clarke to the police, intimating his readiness to be arrested. Information was received by the police that the house had been barricaded.

MR. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman seriously wish the House to believe that, although Father Farrelly was not in the house, he barricaded it, in order to prevent himself from being arrested?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have given the right hon. Gentleman all the information I have.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL RATES.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been paid to the local authorities in England under his new scheme for assisting local rates by contributions from the Imperial Exchequer; how much to the local authorities in Scotland; and how much to the local authorities in Ireland?

*MR. GOSCHEN: The sums which have been paid, or will be paid tomorrow, are:—In England, in respect of disturnpiked and main roads, £538,000; to boards of guardians, £543,000—total, £1,081,000. In Scotland, special grant to Highlands and Islands £29,950; to road authorities £70,000; pauper lunatics and boarded-out children, £25,850—total, £125,800. A further sum of about £28,000 for costs of management will be paid to the Poor Law authorities in respect of the year now concluding, as soon as the exact amount of the probate duty can be ascertained. In Ireland £5,000 has been paid to the Royal Dublin Society. The boards of guardians and the road authorities will receive over £60,000 each as soon as the exact amount of the duty can be ascertained.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD: The principal evidence was that of a police constable, and I wish to know whether there was anything to show, in accordance with the Statute, that Mr. Conlan was a person of ill-fame. I wish also to understand whether, while heretofore, the proprietors and editors of newspapers in Ireland have been proceeded against for publishing the proceedings of suppressed branches of the Irish National League, they are now to be proceeded against for publishing the proceedings of branches that have not been suppressed?

MR. MADDEN: I have distinctly stated that this person was not prosecuted for publishing the report of a meeting. The evidence was that he had published incitements to violate the law of the land.

DOCKYARD MEN.

Mr. CONYBEARE asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it was the fact that since 1885 the "Established" men in the Devonport dockyard have been reduced by one-seventh; whether a similar or proportional reduction had been effected in the other dockyards of the United Kingdom; what was the total number of dockyard discharges of "Established" and "non-Established" men in each of those dockyards in each of the years 1886, 1887, and 1888; and whether it was the fact that during the same period the salaries of the officers in those dockyards have been increased by some £50,000 per annum? He also wished to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty with regard to his letter of the 21st instant to the honourable the senior Member for Devonport (Sir. J. Puleston) in reference to the present dockyard discharges, in which he said—

> "This and other work was given to the dockyard, and a large number of extra men were temporarily taken on for that purpose. Every one so taken on signed, before being employed, the form of which I enclose a copy. The work is now approaching completion, and the men engaged on it are not required, and therefore, in accordance with the terms of their engagement, their employment lapses. The total number so affected is about 450."

Whether it is the fact that in addition to the above-mentioned 450 men, some 150 to 200 other men were noticed to be discharged on Saturday last; whether those notices have been withdrawn, and on what grounds; and, if not, whether they are to be carried into effect, and at what date; whether he can state the exact number of those so discharged, or noticed to be discharged, who were employed under the written agreement mentioned in his letter; and how he explains the fact that a considerable number of men have been discharged, who, having been continuously employed in the yards and factory for periods ranging from 3 to 14 years, could not possibly have come under the terms of the signed agreement as to service referred to in his letter?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Forwood, Lancashire, Ormskirk): The numbers of established men at Devonport and the other dockyards have diminished since 1885 through natural causes—namely, from age entitling them to pensions, or from death—by about one-eighth. As to salaries, instead of an increase of £50,000, as suggested in the question, I believe there has been an actual decrease between 1885 and 1888.

SCOTCH LEGISLATION.

Mr. FIRTH (Dundee) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he expects to be able to introduce the Scotch Local Government Bill before Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have stated twice already that I hope it will be in our power to introduce the Scotch Local Government Bill before Easter.

THE SCOTCH UNIVERSITY BILL.

Mr. CAMPBELL BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): May I make an appeal to the Lord Advocate in reference to the Scotch University Bill? It has been postponed from last night until Monday next. As Monday is to be devoted to important Government business, and as other Government nights for a good time to come will be occupied in the same way, I would ask him to put off this Bill—seeing that there must necessarily be considerable debate on the Motion for the Second Reading—until such time as it may be expected to be brought on. I must protest against the vicious practice of keeping important Bills dangling on the paper when there is no chance of their being proceeded with.

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I put it down for Monday merely to keep it on the paper. Due notice will be given when it will be taken.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS' BANK.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Monaghan, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the rate per cent per annum for the cost of management, including cost of buildings, rent, salaries, postages, &c., of the Post Office Savings' Bank; and whether, in consequence of the reduction of interest on Consols, the rate of interest allowed to depositors in Post Office Savings' Banks will be reduced from the 5th of April next; and, if so, to what extent?

Mr. GOSCHEN: From the last Return of the Postmaster General's Annual Report, it will be seen that the rate per cent for cost of management of the Post Office Savings' Bank is 10s. 8¼d. The annual cost of the interest is about £2 7s., so that £100 deposited in the Post Office Savings' Bank costs, everything included, about £2 18s. At present there is no loss, but rather a small gain to the State from this business; but the time will come when it will probably be necessary, in order to avoid loss, to make a slight reduction in the rate of interest. I do not, however, intend to propose such a reduction this year.

IRELAND—DETENTION OF LETTERS.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary why a telegram directed to him at the House of Commons from Derry Gaol had been sent to Dublin Castle and detained there instead of being forwarded direct? The letter itself contained a paragraph in which Father M'Fadden corrected a statement by the Chief Secretary as to the number of times he (Father M'Fadden) had been remanded, the number having been nine in all.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he had received no information on the subject.

Mr. MAC NEILL: But this is a matter in which the Castle authorities have been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should give notice of the question.

Mr. MAC NEILL: I have given private notice.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The notice is insufficient, and the hon. Member should put the question on the Paper.

ANSWERS IN THE HOUSE.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, N. R., Holmfirth) asked the Speaker whether, as the answer of the Solicitor General for Ireland to a question was entirely inaudible to himself and other hon. Members sitting near him, he was at liberty to ask him to repeat the answer?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That would be a very unusual course to take. There was great deal of conversation in the House at the time. It rests with hon. Gentlemen whether answers are to be audible or not.

Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): Would it not be reasonable that a Minister, instead of reading his reply at the moment when every Member in the House is turning his Paper over, should delay for a moment? [“Oh!”]

FATHER CLARKE.

Mr. GILL (Louth, S.): I beg to ask whether it is not a fact that Father Clarke, after having written a joint letter with Father Farrelly intimating his readiness to be arrested, had publicly celebrated Mass?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have already given a detailed answer in regard to the circumstances of Father Clarke's arrest.

Mr. GILL: The assertion that he had been avoiding arrest is a reflection upon his conduct and the honour of a clergyman.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I must again refer the hon. Member to my answer to a previous question.

Mr. GILL: The answer of the Chief Secretary was to the effect that Father Clarke, having intimated his readiness to be arrested, had practically avoided arrest, and consequently the police had been compelled to execute the warrant for his arrest.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: If the hon. Member will refer to my answer, he will see my reasons for it.

DISTRICT COUNCILS.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether there was any ground for the statement in the newspapers that the Government intended to postpone the introduction of the Bill for constituting district councils in order to facilitate the passing of a Bill to establish a Ministry of Agriculture?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not in the slightest degree responsible for such a statement; and I have not the slightest idea how it could have found its way into the papers unless it was necessary to find matter without regard to its authenticity.

THE LATE MR. JOHN BRIGHT.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I rise, with the permission of the House, to say a few words upon an event which, I believe, is an occasion of sorrow to every Member of this House, and to every subject of the Queen within the United Kingdom — I refer to the death of the right hon. Member for

Birmingham. I had not the honour of a personal intimacy with the right hon. Gentleman. It has been my lot, and that of those who are associated with me, to be engaged in opposition to the right hon. Gentleman during the greater part, if not the whole, of his political career. Therefore, Sir, it may not be altogether unfitting that I should venture to say a few words, however inadequately, as to the loss which I believe the country has sustained by his death. His life has been prolonged beyond the ordinary life of man. He has sat in this House almost uninterruptedly for a period of 45 years. Many of us have had the opportunity of observing the manner in which he has discharged his duty as a Member of Parliament, as a Member of the Government, and still more as a citizen of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire. There is no one, I believe, who would have less desired that a word of adulation or of excessive praise should be used in reference to any action of his life, or to his character. He was a man of such perfect simplicity, such transparent honesty of character, that mere personal praise or adulation would have been most repugnant to him; and, therefore, I shall not venture to indulge in terms of exaggerated praise of the man who is gone. But to many of those who, like myself, have had the great privilege of listening to him in this House I think I may say that it has been impossible, even when we differed from him, and even when his eloquence fell upon us with excessive severity when attacking strongly that which we held to be dear, or the principles which we esteemed to be necessary—even then we could not but feel admiration for the strength and consistency of his character, for the force with which he gave expression to his views, and for the intense conviction he inspired as to his perfect honesty, for the earnestness with which he expressed himself, and for the desire which he conveyed to every man's mind that he could convince them of the truth of the arguments which he urged or of the facts which he stated. He was remorseless—almost cruel—in the severity of his attack; but no one who listened to him could doubt his sincerity. His honesty of purpose, his zeal, his energy, his character inspired admiration and carried the force of conviction frequently with his words to the mass of the people. Few men within the last 45 years have exercised an equal charm or a greater influence in this House. Few men have had deservedly greater influence in the country than the late Mr. Bright. None, I believe, have been more thoroughly in earnest in the propagation of the sentiments to which he attached himself. No one who listened to him could doubt his sincerity; no one could doubt that he really failed to understand how it was that those who differed from him could not accept the views which he put forward. His failure—if it was a failure—was the intensity of his faith in the principles which he advocated. I would venture to say that the honesty and the simplicity of his character were illustrated by the sacrifices which he made not once, not twice, only, in separations between himself and his political associates which occurred from time to time throughout his career. No one can doubt that he was warmly attached to the Party and to the Leader of the Party with which he had identified himself. But he could not sacrifice his convictions to any of those personal considerations which often have great weight with men who hold prominent positions in public life. If, however, for a time he parted from his associates and friends in deference to his own strong sense of duty, there was no trace of anger or of personal animosity in the differences which occurred. There was prominent in all his career that high sense of duty which animated him up to the very last period of his life—a sense of duty to his Sovereign and to his country which rose above all those personal considerations, and all those Party passions, and Party affections which have now passed from him for ever, and which, although he was strong in the expression of his views and feelings, he regretted, I believe, as much as any man could regret but regarded as an inevitable necessity of the public life with which he had long been associated. Mr. Bright has left behind him a memory that will live in the hearts of men long, long after this Parliament shall have passed away. He devoted himself to the service of his country according to the light which was given him with an intensity of conviction and a reality which few public men have ever exhibited. He goes down to his grave followed by the affectionate sorrow of those who differed from him, of those who agreed with him, and of the country which saw in him the example of a man who, from the earliest period of his life, followed out his convictions and devoted himself to the service of his country and of his Queen with absolute and complete loyalty. We hope that he may be followed by men who will emulate the purity and simplicity of his life, and now that he has passed from us there is no whisper of difference, no whisper of anything but sorrow, and we shall follow him with remorse to the grave as a good man who has done his work and who has left an example which many of us would do well to imitate.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I trust I may receive the permission of the House to add a few words to what has been said so well and with such deep sincerity by the right hon. Gentleman on an occasion of peculiar interest. And I cannot help saying, at the outset of the few remarks which I may be led to make, that I think Mr. Bright has been, in a very remarkable degree, happy in the season of his removal from among us. *Felix opportunitate mortis!* He has lived to witness the triumph of almost every great cause—perhaps I might say of every great cause—to which he had especially devoted his heart and mind. He has lived to establish a special claim to the admiration of those from whom he differed through a long political life by his marked concurrence with them on the prominent and dominant question of the hour. And while he has in that way additionally opened the minds and the hearts of those from whom he had differed to an appreciation of his merits, I believe, and I think I may venture to say, he lost nothing by the want of concord on a particular subject which we so much lamented—he lost nothing, in any portion of the party with which he had been so long associated, of the admiration and the gratitude to which they felt him to be so well entitled. I do not remember that on any occasion, from the lips of any single individual since Mr. Bright came to be separated from the great bulk of the Liberal Party on the Irish Question, there has proceeded any word—I do not say of question as to his motives, for that would have been ridiculous in the highest degree—but a single word of disparagement as to the course he pursued. For my own part I may, perhaps, make this acknowledgment—that I have not through my whole political life fully embraced what I take to be the character of Mr. Bright and the value of his character to the country. I mention this because it was at a peculiar epoch—the epoch of the Crimean War—that I came more fully to understand than I had done before the position which was held by him and by his eminent, and I must go a step further and say his illustrious, friend Mr. Cobden in the country. These men had lived upon the confidence, the approval, and the applause of the people. The work of their lives had been to propel the tide of public sentiment. Suddenly there came a great occasion on which they differed from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen. I myself was one of those who did not agree with them in the particular view which they took of the Crimean conflict, but I felt profoundly what must have been the moral elevation of the men who, having been nurtured through their lives in the atmosphere of popular approval and enthusiasm, could at a moment's notice consent to part with the whole of that favour which they had hitherto enjoyed and which their opponents thought to be the very breath of their nostrils. They accepted, undoubtedly, the unpopularity of opposing that war, which, although many may have since changed their opinion with regard to it, commanded, if not the unanimous, yet the enormously prevailing approval and concurrence of the country. At that time it was—although we had known much of Mr. Bright before—that we learnt something more. We had known the great mental gifts which distinguished him; we had known his courage and his consistency; we had known his splendid eloquence, which then was or afterwards came to be acknowledged as the loftiest that has sounded within these walls for several generations. But we had not till then known how high the moral tone of those popular leaders had been elevated, what splendid examples they set to the whole of their contemporaries and to coming generations, and with what readiness they could part with popular sympathy and support for the sake of the right and of their conscientious convictions. I will not now refer to the great gifts of Mr. Bright except as to one minor particular; but I cannot help allowing myself the gratification of recording that Mr. Bright was, and that he knew himself to be, and he delighted to be, one of the chief guardians among us of the purity of the English tongue. He knew how the character of the nation is associated with its language; and as he was in everything an Englishman profoundly attached to the country in which he was born, so the tongue of his people was to him almost an object of worship; and in the long course of his speeches it would be difficult, indeed hardly possible, to find a single case in which that noble language, the language of Shakespeare and of Milton, did not receive an illustration from his Parliamentary eloquence. There is another circumstance in the career of Mr. Bright that is better known to me, perhaps, than to any other person, and which I must give myself the pleasure of mentioning. Everyone is aware that for him office had no attraction, but perhaps hardly any of those who hear me can be aware of the extraordinary efforts which were required to induce Mr. Bright under any circumstances to become a servant of the Crown. It was in the crisis of 1868 with regard to the Irish question, and when especially the fate of the Irish Church hung in the balance, that it was my duty to propose to Mr. Bright that he should become a Cabinet Minister. I do not know, Sir, that I ever undertook so difficult a task; but this I do know, that from 11 o'clock at night until one o'clock in the morning we steadily debated that subject, and it was only at the last moment that it was possible for him to set aside the repugnance he had felt to doing anything which might, in the eyes of any one, even of the more ignorant of his fellow-countrymen, appear to detract in the slightest degree from that lofty independence of character which he had heretofore maintained, and which, I will venture to say, never to the end of his career was for a moment lowered. It was the happy lot of Mr. Bright to unite so many intellectual gifts that, if we had had need to dwell upon them alone, we should have presented a dazzling picture to the world; but it was also his happy lot to teach us moral lessons, and by the simplicity, by the consistency, and by the unfailing courage and constancy of his life to present to us a combination of qualities so moral in their nature as to carry us at once into a higher atmosphere. The sympathies of Mr. Bright were not only strong, but active; they were not sympathies which can answer to the calls made upon them for the moment, but they were the sympathies of a man who sought far and near for objects on which to bestow the inestimable advantage of his eloquence and of his courage. In Ireland in the days when the support of the Irish race was rare, in India when the support of the native race was rarer still, in America at the time when Mr. Bright probably foresaw the ultimate issue of the great struggle of 1861, and when he stood as the representative of an exceedingly small portion of the educated community of this country — although undoubtedly they represented a very large part of the national sentiment—in all these cases Mr. Bright went far outside the necessities of his calling, and not only subjects which demanded his attention as a Member of this House, but whatever touched him as a man, whatever touched him as a subject, and whatever touched him as a member of the great Anglo-Saxon race—all these questions, unasked, obtained not only his sincere advocacy, but his enthusiastic aid. All the causes which are associated with the names to which I have referred, as well as many others, obtained from his powerful advocacy an assistance and a distinct advance in the estimation of the world, and made a distinct progress on their road towards triumphant success. It has thus come about that we feel that Mr. Bright is entitled to a higher eulogy than any that could be due to intellect or than any that could be due to success. Of mere success he was indeed a conspicuous example; in intellect he might lay claim to a most distinguished place; but the character of the man lay deeper than his intellect, deeper than his eloquence, deeper than anything that could be described as seen upon the surface, and the supreme eulogy which is due is, I apprehend, that he lifted political life to a higher elevation and to a loftier standard, and that he has thereby bequeathed to his country the character of a statesman which can be made the subject not only of admiration and of gratitude, but even of what I do not exaggerate in calling—as it has been well called already by one of his admiring eulogists—reverential contemplation. The right hon. Gentleman said that he trusted there would be no note of dissonance, in the sense which the country entertained for the claims, the merits, and the distinctions of Mr. Bright, and I may safely say that on that score all apprehension may be dismissed. In the encomiums that have sprung up from every quarter there is no note of dissonance, there is no discordant minority, however small, the sense of his countrymen is the sense of their unanimity. It goes forth throughout the length and breadth of the land, and I do not know that any statesman of my time has ever had the happiness to receive on his removal from this passing world honours and approval at once so enthusiastic, so universal, and so unbroken. And yet, Sir, none could better have dispensed with the tributes of the moment, because the triumphs of his life are triumphs recorded in the advance of his country and in the condition of his countrymen. His name remains indelibly written in the annals of this Empire—aye, indelibly written, too, upon the hearts of the great and ever-spreading race to which he belonged—that race in whose wide expansion he rejoiced, and whose power and pre-eminence he believed to be full of promise and full of glory for the best interests of mankind.

The Marquess of HARTINGTON (Lancashire, Rossendale): Perhaps the House will allow me, in the name of some of those hon. Members with whom in recent times it has happened that Mr. Bright has been very closely associated in opinion, to express our thanks to the Leader of the House, and to the Leader of the Opposition, for the touching and noble words in which they have given expression to the universal regret which is felt throughout the country for the loss it has just sustained. If I may be allowed to add, however inadequately and imperfectly, a very few words to those which have been already uttered, it would be to endeavour to give my own estimate of those qualities possessed by the late Mr. Bright which have combined to win for his character—since it has been fully understood by the country—the admiration, the respect, and I may say the veneration of his countrymen. I do not think that that result has been due in any degree, as has already been said by my right hon. Friend near me, to the successful advocacy of the great principles in which he took so large a share, nor even to the splendid eloquence which he brought to bear in their support. The cause of the estimation in which the late Mr. Bright was held is to be found rather in those qualities to which reference has already been made—namely, the transparent simplicity of his character, and the high standard of political conduct which he set before his fellows. Mr. Bright did not profess to be—perhaps he was not—a statesman versed in all the arts of government—a statesman capable of conducting all the complicated affairs of a great nation; but upon certain subjects Mr. Bright had thought deeply and felt strongly, and had formed convictions which, to his mind, carried all the weight of absolute and indisputable truth. It was this absolute conviction which gave to the eloquence of Mr. Bright extraordinary and unrivalled power and force. As to the standard of political conduct which Mr. Bright raised for himself, I will not say that we have not known others as personally pure, as patriotic, as independent as himself; but I think we have known few men who have brought to the forming of their political conduct a standard equal to that which he set before himself. In forming his political opinions, in shaping his political conduct, he consistently and resolutely determined, as perhaps few men have ever been equally able to determine, that the standard which should guide his political conduct should be precisely the same rule as that which the strictest principles of morality imposed upon the private life and character of the man. These are the things which have combined to make Mr. Bright, if not one of the foremost statesmen, one of the noblest figures we have ever known in Parliament. These are the qualities which have combined to win for him the admiration of all who have had the pleasure of his personal friendship. These are the qualities which, in my judgment, will make his memory a precious possession of the nation, and which will make it an example to be steadily kept in view and followed by all who may hereafter inspire to lead public opinion in this country, and to combine the possession of political influence and power with the strictest adherence to the rules of right and duty.

Mr. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Cork, an absence quite unavoidable, and which he regrets as much as I do, I desire to ask leave to address a few wòrds to the House. Any words of mine must come like an anti-climax after the noble eloquence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. But my colleagues and I feel that if on this occasion no voice were to be raised from the benches on which we sit, our silence might possibly be misconstrued or at least be misunderstood. It is at least possible that if we remained silent it might be thought that because of late years we had not Mr. Bright's sympathy and support for our national cause, we were unwilling to associate ourselves in the tribute all other Parties are paying to his career and to his memory. Mr. Speaker, the Irish Party is not so wanting in generosity, and the memory of the Irish people is not so short. We regret—we deeply regret—that we had not of late years the unspeakable advantage of Mr. Bright's sympathy and support, but we are not thinking much of that just now—we are not desirous of thinking of it. In our ordinary experience of life we often find that impressions made long ago remain abiding and imperishable, while the events which occurred the day before yesterday are already forgotten. So we feel, so we wish to feel, for the great public and private career of Mr. Bright. Our memory goes back to the time when he championed our Irish cause with an eloquence and a sincerity never surpassed in the struggle for any great purpose whatever. We cannot but remember that he was our champion and our advocate at a time when we had nothing like the amount of sympathy and support in this House and out of it which, thanks alike to friends and enemies, we possess to-day. We remember, too, we must remember, that some of the most superb, the most magnificent illustrations of his immortal eloquence were given to champion the cause of the suffering Irish peasant, and to awaken in this country a sympathy with the Irish cause. Bearing in mind all these things, and others I will not go through, we feel we cannot remain silent on an occasion like the present. For myself personally, I may say I speak with the memory of long years of close association with Mr. Bright. I worked with him and under him in many thrilling struggles and in many great political movements. Remembering, then, what he did for Ireland in days gone by, and with the full conviction, alluded to by the First Lord of the Treasury, that every one of Mr. Bright's views was conscientious and sincere, we desire to associate ourselves with the tribute paid in this House to his memory, and we claim the right of Ireland to lay her *immortelle*, her mourning wreath, on this great Englishman's grave.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, West): I hope the House will allow me to say a very few words upon this subject. I shall not venture to add anything to what has already been spoken, so eloquently and so feelingly, by the Leaders of Parties in this House as to Mr. Bright's claims to our admiration as a great popular Leader, a great Tribune of the people. It is only of the Friend and of the Colleague that I would wish to say a few words. I have been personally acquainted with Mr. Bright for more than 30 years, almost from the day when he was elected for the first time as the Member for Birmingham. Since then he has occupied a position as a Parliamentary Representative which I think is unique in our history. He was returned in his absence while he was still prostrated by illness induced by overwork, and he was returned, as he always has been subsequently, without any pledge of any kind and without any expense to himself. The only condition which was suggested to him was that, in order to mark the fact that the constituency considered that it was receiving and not conferring an obligation, he should himself be always exempt from any claim to contribute in any way to our local institutions or to our political organizations; and that understanding has been observed in all its fulness down to the present time. I venture to think that relations so begun and so maintained for a period of a generation are honourable alike to the constituency and to its great Representative. I well remember the first speech which Mr. Bright addressed to his constituents in the autumn of 1857 in the Town Hall, Birmingham. He spoke in terms of great pathos of the illness from which he had just recovered, when, as he said, from a condition of apparent strength he had been brought down to a condition exceeding the weakness of a little child. He spoke of the innumerable kindnesses he had received from all classes and conditions of his fellow-countrymen, and he went on to express the consolation it had been to him in his time of suffering to receive this proof of the confidence and affection of the electors and population of the great central city of the kingdom. He said:—

> "I shall not attempt, by the employment of any elaborate phrases, to express to you what I felt at the time when you conferred upon me the signal honour of returning me as one of your representatives to the House of Commons. I am not sufficiently master of the English language to discover words which shall express what I then felt, and what I feel now towards you for what you did then, and for the reception which you have given me to-night. I never imagined for a moment that you were prepared to endorse all my opinions, or to sanction every political act with which I have been connected; but I accepted your resolution in choosing me as meaning this—that you had watched my political career; that you believed it had been an honest one; that you were satisfied I had not swerved knowingly to the right hand or to the left; that the attractions of power had not turned me aside; that I had not changed my course from any view of courting a fleeting popularity; and, further, that you are of this opinion—an opinion which I religiously hold —that the man whose political career is on a line with his conscientious convictions can never be unfaithful to his constituents or to his country."

Mr. Speaker, the motives which Mr. Bright assigned as actuating his constituents in choosing him have continued from that day to determine their feelings towards him; and now that he has passed away, now that in a beautiful figure, which he himself was the first to use, he has gone "to join the great majority," those who differed from him are united to those who agreed with him in mourning his loss, in honouring his memory, and in respecting his courage, his consistency, and his honesty. The characteristics which distinguished his public actions were equally conspicuous in his private life. Mr. Bright was a most loyal colleague, most considerate, most unselfish. He was, as many Members of this House can testify, the most delightful company, always simple, always straightforward, always unmindful of himself. He was very strenuous in asserting the principles and convictions which he held to be true and just, but with all his strength no one ever knew him to do an unfair or an ungenerous thing. I remember his once saying to me—it may seem perhaps almost trivial to recall it, but it was characteristic of the man—that whenever he entered a strange house, if there were a dog or a cat in it it always came to him directly and made friends with him. I think that those domestic animals are good judges of character, and I know—I am certain—that theirs was the only popularity that Mr. Bright ever courted. I have no right to detain the House further; I only spoke because Mr. Bright was in a special sense the Member for Birmingham, and because he has always enjoyed the affection and the reverence of every man and every woman in that great community.

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) [SALARY, &c.]

Committee to consider of authorizing the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a salary to the Accountant of Court, who may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend and extend the law relating to Judicial Factors and others in Scotland, and to unite the office of the Accountant of the Court of Sessions and the Accountant in Bankruptcy in Scotland, and of salaries to the clerks who may be appointed by him, also the payment of compensation to the holder of the office of Accountant of the Court of Session for abolition of his office, and of remuneration to such persons as may be employed to audit accounts under the provisions of the said Act (Queen's Recommendation signified), upon Monday 1st April.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to the Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Bill, without Amendment.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE PAYMENT OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): It is my duty, Sir, to-night, to call the attention of the House to the subject of the payment of Members, and to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it well deserves the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, whether and under what conditions it would be expedient to revert to the ancient custom of paying Members for their services in Parliament."

Now, Sir, on a previous occasion the House was good enough to grant me a very liberal measure of its attention and indulgence when I referred to this subject; and to-night, considering the circumstances by which we are surrounded, I shall again have to ask its indulgence, although I hope I may not unduly trespass on the limits of its time by the remarks which I have to make. I wish, in the first place, to make one or two observations with reference to the debate and division which followed on the occasion to which I have referred. To my mind both that debate and the division were of a highly satisfactory character, and were such as to encourage me to persevere with the object I have in view. On that occasion many of the Leaders on this side of the House, following the lead of Lord Althorp, Lord Russell, and others in 1830, spoke and voted in favour of the principle embodied in the Resolution which I moved. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow pointed out in a most forcible and able manner the anomalous condition in which the House now stands in regard to this question, by consenting to pay certain Members for political services and refusing to extend that principle to others; and, on the other hand, the Minister who replied on behalf of the Government declared that his opposition was not to the principle of the Resolution. He said, "He was not sure that the day might not come when it would be expedient to pay Members"; but he thought that day had not come. Here we have the Liberal Leaders speaking and voting for the Motion, and the Minister who replied on behalf of the Government, using the remarkable words I have quoted. Hon. Members will remember that my Motion was lost by a majority of 57 in a House of more than 330 Members. Perhaps the House will be interested in knowing from a Return since issued that there are 101 Members of the House who are in receipt of public money. Twenty-two receive sums under £20; 16, from £20 to £100; 19, from £100 to £500; 44, from £500 to £1,000; and, according to a Return moved for by Lord Monkswell, in the Lords, 27 Members receive sums under £20; 21 receive from £20 to £100; 23, from £100 to £500; and 80, from £500 to £5,000. In all, 252 Members of both Houses receive, in the aggregate, £814,081, and 58 of those who defeated my Motion receive, in the aggregate, £84,368, or an average of £1,454 each. I should like to ask the hon. Member for Flintshire if his Motion embraces in its terms any of those Members who receive public money, and, while doing so, voted against my Resolution; are they among the Members who "neither need nor desire payment for their services in Parliament?" My hon. Friend has the best intentions, no doubt, in putting down this Amendment to my Resolution; but I think it is a distinct case of going back on the traditions of the Liberal Party; for, as I have already pointed out, the Leaders of the Liberal Party of 60 years ago were in full sympathy with the practice to which I am now desirous of calling attention. I am asking the Government to consider whether or not it would be desirable, and under what conditions, to revert to the practice of paying Members. Under the present system it is impossible to have absolute liberty of choice between rich and poor candidates, and unless you are prepared to provide means which will afford the constituencies the most complete and perfect liberty in the choice of candidates, then I say your representative Government becomes a mere sham and delusion. The present arrangement tends entirely to the representation in this House of wealth and of the professions as well as the naval and military services. The representatives of the Services are in many cases paid out of the public funds for their services in Parliament, for it is well known that these Gentlemen who have seats in this House are, while the House is sitting, exempt from the performance of their duties with respect to the Army and Navy. Why, then, should the industrial interest be the only interest saddled with a burden in order to obtain representation in this House? I think that is an unfair, unjust, and unreasonable tax to impose on the working classes of this country. It is perfectly true that they have obtained a certain proportion of Representation in this House, but they have only been able to do so by imposing on themselves taxes which are not imposed on the richer constituencies in the country. I have no hesitation in saying that our existing arrangements are most unreasonable, and that Members of this House are called upon to make sacrifices and incur burdens which the representatives of no other country are required to make. If the Democracy—the government of the people—is to be otherwise than a delusion and a snare, it is absolutely necessary that the Government should take some steps to bring about such a condition of things as will give to the constituencies full liberty of choice in the selection of candidates. My hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) has placed an Amendment on the Paper, which I presume will, in his mind, obviate the difficulty we have now to contend with. How does he propose to meet the difficulty? By making the payment of Members a charge upon the localities. But I would point out to the House that service in this House is a service given to the general public in a public capacity; and I fail to see why the localities should be called upon to burden themselves with payment for services that are discharged in the interests of the general community. It is perfectly true that the Amendment does not state whether the levy is to be made on the whole locality or upon those only who elect the Representatives. Perhaps my hon. Friend will be able to enlighten the House when he moves his Amendment. With regard to the practice which obtains in other countries, as I went into that matter at some length on a former occasion I will only make this general statement now, with the exception of Italy, there is no other Representative Assembly in the world in which Members are not paid for their public services, as well as being allowed their travelling expenses. I referred to the fact that, in the United States of America, Members of Congress are paid an allowance equal to about £1,000, and it was suggested by the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) that I advocated a similar allowance for Members of this House. That was a perfectly gratuitous assumption on the part of the hon. Member. I never thought of suggesting any such sum, and my own view would rather be in favour of an allowance similar to that paid to the members of the Chamber of Deputies in France, which is about £375. I venture to say that for the amount of service rendered in this House that that is not an exorbitant sum. It is said that the payment of Members will reduce the representation in this House to a profession, and that our Parliamentary institutions will be considerably degraded thereby. That is an argument which has been used against every reform. It was used in the agitation for Parliamentary reform in 1832, in 1868, and again in 1884. It was said that if you extended the Franchise, the Representatives sent to this House would prove a discredit to the dignity of the House; but on each of those occasions the prediction proved untrue, and I venture to say that it will prove equally untrue in the present case. A writer in the *Saturday Review* says that "the payment of Members will fundamentally change the character of the House of Commons, and that the respect now paid to a Parliamentary position will to a great extent be withdrawn." The same argument has been urged against every reform, and in my opinion it is an argument based on profound mistrust of the judgment of the people. It suggests that the constituencies cannot be trusted to send Representatives to this House who will discharge their duties in a respectable and dignified manner. What does the argument mean? It means that the constituents are not to be trusted to discriminate between a trading adventurer and an able and capable man, who will look after their interests in this House. Will any hon. Member say that his constituents are not to be trusted in making a selection? Surely, if they are, why may not the rest be trusted? In putting the question in the form in which I have placed it upon the Paper, I have not been desirous of needlessly inconveniencing the Government. I ask them to consider under what conditions, if any, the practice of paying Members for their services in Parliament may be reverted to, and the fact must not be forgotten that there are 101 Members of this House who are in receipt of public money for public services, and 151 Members of the other House; therefore, I maintain that it is only in the interests of justice to extend the practice to the whole of the Representatives in this House. I know I may be told that there is no country in the world in which there is such wealth as in this, and that men are prepared to make great sacrifices in order to obtain a position in this House. At the same time, I venture to think that the services of a Representative are not given simply for the honour of a position in this House, but to enhance the value of the particular vocation in which these hon. Gentlemen are employed. We know what *éclat* it gives to men who are connected with the professions in the country to write after their names the magic letters "M.P." Therefore, although we have hon. Members ostensibly making sacrifices for a position in this House, those sacrifices are really made with a view to their own ultimate benefit. Therefore, believing that some such measure as this is necessary to afford the constituencies full and complete choice in the selection of their Representatives, I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

*MR. ASQUITH (Fife, E.): I desire, in seconding the Resolution, to do so in as few a words as possible, because I am satisfied that nothing I can say would materially add to the force of the very cogent argument which my hon. Friend has just addressed to the House. I confess that I do not attach quite so much importance as my hon. Friend appears, from the terms of his Motion, to do to the usages of antiquity. I think that the social and economic conditions of the time when a Member of this House used to receive a wage of 2s. or 4s a day for his services were so widely different from our own, that no very useful argument can be drawn either from the adoption or the subsequent abandonment of that practice. Nor do I think that the practice of other countries, although material and important, is at all decisive of the question. It is unquestionably a fact, on which those who oppose this Motion will have to attempt to give some opinion, that there is not, with an insignificant exception, a country in the world, except Italy, where representative government exists, in which, sooner or later, directly or indirectly, the State has not been obliged to remunerate the Members of the Legislature. But I agree with those who say that this proposal must be justified in the circumstances of our own time and our own country, and, what is more, in the interest, not of this class or that, but of the nation as a whole. I have come to the conclusion—I confess, not without a good deal of deliberation—that the proposal can be justified upon that ground. Its simple, but sufficient, justification, in my judgment, is this: that its adoption is necessary in order to complete and give effect to the reconstruction upon a democratic basis of our representative system. The proposal is, to my mind, the practical complement and corollary of the franchise legislation of the last 20 years. What is the principle which underlies that legislation? It is that it is to the interest of the community—not of one class more than another—that every man, subject to certain conditions, many of which, if not all, may disappear before we are many years older, that every man should have a voice in and a responsibility for the making and the administration of the law. If that is your principle, how are you going to carry it out in practice? What is the good of giving to the great majority of the people the right to choose their representatives if, at the same time, you artificially restrict and limit the area of their choice? What, in other words, is the good of a democratic suffrage when it is as easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle as it is for a working man to get into this House? No one will deny that something like two-thirds or three fourths of the electorate of this country belong to the working class, and yet, as representing the working class in this House, we have, in point of numbers, but an insignificant fraction. I am not a fanatical believer in class representation. Natural forces have been and are at work in favour of men of wealth, leisure, and education. Those natural forces you can do nothing by legislation to check or counteract. But your present system, with the disparity it has brought about in the composition of the electorate and the elected, adds to the natural forces an artificial weight which they ought not to possess, and which ought to be taken away by legislation. In the first place, the enormous and excessive cost of elections which is thrown upon the candidate is a public charge that ought to be borne by the community. But, over and above that, I am convinced that so long as a man who earns his livelihood by labour cannot get a seat in Parliament), except by some special provision which throws a great and most unjust burden upon his class or constituency, the people will not have perfect freedom of choice, and cannot, therefore, give full effect to the principle of democratic legislation. Let me allude to one or two of the objections which are made to this proposal. It is said first of all that it will be expensive. I do not think that the House will seriously consider that there is much in that objection. My hon. Friend does not ask the House to commit itself to any specific figure, but has suggested a reasonable compromise between a too high and a too low view of the matter—namely, £1 a day, or £360 to £370 a-year. The total charge involved would be about £250,000 a-year. That sum might very easily be obtained without imposing any additional taxation. A small charge like this could be met by re-arranging official salaries upon a more moderate and reasonable scale, by reducing the ornamental sinecures, and by curtailing the grossly unreasonable pensions and superannuation system. In various ways economy might be effected which would easily meet the requirements of the case. With regard to the objection raised in the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), who says, with apparent plausibility, why thrust the payment upon Members who do not desire it, and why not make it a matter for the consideration of the constituency itself; my answer is that if our argument is well-founded, it is a matter not of local but of national concern. Then again, the Amendment does not go to the root of the matter; and to pay Members in the way suggested by my hon. Friend would be to establish a most invidious distinction in this House. I cannot see any difference in principle between paying a Minister of the Crown a salary for the performance of administrative and executive work and paying a Member of the House a salary for the discharge of the equally important, though often much more thankless, duty of exposing the blunders of the Minister and correcting his mistakes. I never heard of Ministers, although they notoriously belong to the wealthy classes of the country, declining to receive their official salaries. I come now, lastly, to what is, after all, the most serious and the only fundamental objection to this proposal—namely, that it would demoralize us by introducing into public life a mercenary element, and by creating a class of professional politicians. I have been reading the book which my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has published with regard to American institutions, and I find that the existence of a class of professional politicians is, after all, not such a very bad thing for the community. But, whether good or bad, no one who has read that book and studied the mass of information to be found in it can doubt that the very least potent of the causes which have tended to the creation of that class has been the salaries paid to Members of Congress and Members of the State Legislatures. Is it not time that in this matter as well as in others we should clear our minds of cant? To listen to some language, it might be supposed that no one enters the House of Commons but from a single-minded desire to serve his country, and that my hon. Friend who moved the Resolution is going for the first time, in this scene of Arcadian purity and simplicity, to open the door to a horde of self-seekers and place-hunters. Anyone who is really acquainted with the facts knows that that is not a fair description of the conditions of public life. Look at the Treasury Bench, or, for that matter, to the front Opposition Bench. We see on the two front benches conveniently concentrated what I may call the flower of English statesmanship. I am sorry to raise a blush upon the cheeks of right hon. Gentlemen; but, the truth is, we are so much more in the habit of listening to them than they are of listening to us, that we rarely have the opportunity of letting them know the strength and genuineness of our affectionate admiration. They are the men who, in the struggle for existence, have outpaced or trampled down all their competitors. Well, Sir, looking at these men, whose patriotism no one will call in question, will any one of them get up and say that office—I do not of course mean the emoluments alone, but the power, the patronage, the visible authority of which office is the symbol — will any one of them say that the chance of getting these things, the hope of keeping them, the fear of losing them, do not form a powerful motive in the political life of this country? I do not for a moment say that only of the Front Benches. It applies also to those who have never sat upon the Front Benches, but who hope some day to sit there, and to those who, having sat upon those Benches, and been exiled by the caprice of fortune, hope, some day, to get back again. Then there are the men who come here in the hope of business or professional advancement, and even the men who are moved by the vulgarest form of vulgar ambition—the desire to get into what is called society. With all these forces at work, in active operation —mixed as I agree they are, and as I know they always will be, with honest zeal for the public service, with which few of them are altogether inconsistent—can anyone seriously maintain that the adoption of this trivial proposition, for so it is, this proposition to allow a Member some £300 or £400 a-year, would substantially add to the mercenary elements by which our public life is invaded? One other remark on the subject of professional politicians. There is another sense of the term professional politician, and I do believe that the adoption of this proposal would add, and add beneficially, to the class—professional politicians, I mean, in the better sense of the word—the men who make politics the serious business of life as distinguished from the amateur or dilettante. Under our existing system there are numbers of such men excluded from the service of the State. Take the common case of a young man who has been, perhaps, through the training of a public school and university, and the bent of whose mind and abilities is in the direction of politics. He has equipped himself at all points for the work of public life, but he does not possess that modicum of fortune necessary, under our system, to become a candidate for a seat in this House. Under the old system of a hundred years ago, with all its abuses provision was made for a case like this. You had pocket boroughs, sinecures, and various forms of patronage, the acceptance of which was not thought dishonourable, according to the ideas of that day, by which a man's entrance into Parliamentary life was promoted. All this has been swept away, and rightly so, but then you have put nothing in its place. What is a man to do under such circumstances? He goes into business, or he becomes a journalist, or he enters a profession; he may even, by stress of necessity, be driven to go to the Bar. And what is the result? After his best powers, perhaps the best years of his life, have been occupied and absorbed in other pursuits, he is able at last to gratify his desire, to indulge his natural bent late in life, certainly with his powers jaded and impaired—he comes and offers to the service of the State the fag-end of his time, the dregs of his abilities. I do not wish to over-colour or overstate the matter, nor do I look forward to a time when this House will not be mainly composed of men of leisure. But this I do say: that our present system is fatally defective on two sides; on the one hand, it does not adequately and faithfully reflect the different interests and opinions of different classes of the community; and, on the other hand, it does exclude from the service of the State men whose fortune is not equal to their abilities, and by so doing it cripples the resources, the effective resources of the country, and impoverishes our public life. On these grounds I heartily support the proposition of my hon. Friend.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it well deserves the consideration of Her Majesty's Government whether, and under what conditions, it would be expedient to revert to ancient custom of paying Members for the services in Parliament,"—(*Mr. Fenwick*,)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. G. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport): Although I have listened with much admiration to the speech of the hon. and learned Member who has just sat down, I cannot say that his arguments have in any degree removed my objections to this proposal. The hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division (Mr. Fenwick) recommends his Motion on the ground that it is a reversion to an ancient custom. No doubt there is a specious air of Conservatism about this, but I hope that no hon. Member will be so incautious as to swallow so transparent a bait. I noticed that, in his speech, the hon. Member skated very lightly over this question of ancient custom, while the hon. and learned Member who last spoke professed contempt for ancient custom altogether. As a matter of fact, ancient custom, so far from being a precedent for this proposal, is in direct opposition to it. That it was an ancient custom for Members to be paid is perfectly true. But by whom? Out of what fund? They were not, and they never have been, paid from the Imperial Exchequer. They were paid by their constituents, and so little enamoured were the constituencies with this old system that they took refuge behind every possible plea in order to escape the payment of their Members, and even consented to the worst of all horrors—total disfranchisement—rather than put their hands in their pockets to pay for their Members of Parliament. I have instances here with which I need not trouble the House, though, if an appeal is made to ancient custom, the further we go back the better, I suppose, will the illustration be. In the days of Edward II. a Member for Wiltshire, who appears to have been a very simple-minded kind of person, received 1s. 4d. a day, until it came to his knowledge that he was by law entitled to 4s., whereupon he brought an action against the Sheriff for the balance. A little later on we find that the Cambridge townsmen had a still more innocent individual as their Representative, for they compounded with him for 1s. a day for his services in Parliament. If ancient custom is appealed to, Members of Parliament may have grown more wise, but I do not suppose that constituencies have grown more foolish; and I can hardly imagine that hon. Members opposite would like, by reverting to ancient custom, to revive a system that often led to distraint, and that might lead, if distraint was not successful, to eviction. In fact, ancient custom, so far as it can be quoted at all, may be quoted in favour of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), who proposes the partial resumption, under limited circumstances, of a system that was once universal, but afterwards fell into desuetude. But it certainly cannot be quoted by the hon. Member for Wansbeck, whose proposal, so far from being a return to antiquity, is a Radical innovation without warrant in previous history. Just a word or two on the question of expense. The hon. and learned Member (Mr. Asquith), I was interested to observe, alluded to the financial question as not a serious one. Let us see whether it is or not. We have been told that American Senators and Congressmen are paid at the rate of £1,000 a-year, with an extra mileage for railway expenses. The hon. Member for Wansbeck also said that in France Senators and Deputies are paid a sum equal to about £375. I believe it is really £360. Well, I do not, for my part, see any reason why, if we are to be paid a salary, we should be rated at a lower figure than the American Congressman; but apparently the hon. Member entertains a more modest estimate of his own Parliamentary worth, or at least of the pecuniary recognition of it which the country is likely to entertain, and he is prepared to take £375. Well, there are 670 Members here; and I suppose that until representation in certain quarters of the House is reduced to more just proportions, 670 will remain the figure. The hon. Member who spoke last, working out the sum, told us that 670 times 375 gives a grand total of £250,000. Now, he said this was a trifling addition to the public expenditure. It may seem a very small thing in his eyes, but I think an expenditure of £250,000 a-year would be thought a very serious item in the country; that it would be regarded as the most serious of the questions raised by this proposal. I ask the House to note the quarter of the House from which this Motion proceeds. It comes from hon. Members whose financial consciences are so sensitive that they cannot stand the strain of putting our Naval Forces, by which alone we subsist as a first-rate Power, in a state of practical efficiency. It comes from that quarter of the House. It proceeds from hon. Members who come down here day after day, and night after night, and move reductions of paltry sums of £50 and £100 from the salaries of hon. and right hon. Gentleman on that Bench. We now find that though they are fond enough of nibbling at the salaries of others, they have very voracious stomachs indeed when it comes to asking salaries for themselves. What I feel disposed to say to hon. Members is this—"Why do you not have the courage of your opinions? If you think you ought to be paid by the country for representing it here, why do you not go down to your constituents and ask them to put their hands in their pockets and find the money for payment?" That would be a perfectly honest, and straightforward thing to do; and, what is more, it is the line that at no distant time was adopted by the Radical Party when they advocated the payment of Members. I have here a book called the "Radical Programme," which only a few years ago was regarded as indicating the high water mark of extreme Radicalism. The words therein in reference to the payment of Members are—

> "Whatever sum should be paid to the representatives of the people, it should be a charge not on the Imperial Exchequer, but on the constituencies."

Well, it appears that the Radical high water mark has receded since then. Why do not hon. Members deal frankly with their constituents, instead of coming to the House and attempting to shuffle off responsibility by throwing a charge upon the Consolidated Fund? I venture to submit to the House that there are two questions which ought to be answered before we can vote for this Motion, and to neither of which has any answer been given. Can it be shown that the House of Commons, under a system of non-payment of Members, suffers by the exclusion of men or the non-representation of classes who otherwise might be returned or represented? The hon. and learned Member for Fife says poor men are excluded, and I think the hon. Member for Wansbeck said working class representatives are excluded. Well, as regards poor men, I doubt very much whether a sum of £375 a-year, as proposed, would be the means of bringing poor men into the House, and for this reason—that it would be hardly worth while for a man, for a moderate recompense of that kind, to throw up his profession in order to run the risk of election to this House, and, even if he were returned, to run the further risk of losing his seat a little while afterwards, and being thrown upon the world with no profession at all. I may appeal to the experience in Victoria. A salary of £300 is paid there to Members of the Legislative Chamber; but it has not been found that this payment brings in poor men or working class representatives. In speaking of the latter, I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I do not mean to say one word in depreciation of labour representatives in the House; on the contrary, I think that for fairness of tone, for courtesy of manner, for contribution to Debate and to legislation, they deserve the thanks of the House of Commons. But, I think, the advantages of working-class representation can be very easily exaggerated. I think, to quote the hon. and learned Member for Fife, there is a great deal of cant talked on this subject. A few years ago we were told how desirable it was that Mr. Joseph Arch should be elected as the peculiar and special representative of the class of agricultural labourers. Hon. and right hon. Members opposite, with great liberality, paid his expenses, and he became a Member. During the six months that he was here I do not remember that he cut a very distinguished figure. I do not remember that he did, and I speak from personal recollection, for though I was not a Member of the House, I happened, from that Gallery, to hear every speech that he made. Certainly, whatever figure he cut, the first time he went back to his constituency for re-election they returned him no more, and all that good Liberal money was thrown away. I do not see that it is an argument at all, because working-class representatives behave well or creditably in this House, that, therefore, you should add considerably to their number. We have among us many Members belonging to the Services—Admirals, Colonels, and others, whose demeanour is irreproachable, and who seldom speak except on their own subjects; but no one would say that that is a reason why we should have more of them. I do not suppose the hon. Member for Northampton would say that because we have barristers among us who are sometimes able to throw off the trammels of Party subserviency and to vote according to their convictions, that, therefore, we should have more barristers. The hon. Member who brought forward this argument, said, alluding to the system under which we exist, that with a constituency of 6,000,000, three-fifths belong to the working classes Well, if that be so, then there is scarcely a Member here of whom it may not be said that he has an honest claim to be considered a working-class Representative. I observe no reluctance in any part of the House to deal with working-class measures. I remember the Coal Mines Regulation Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill, and I remember, too, of this last mentioned Bill, that it was owing to the action of the labour representatives that it was not passed into law. When hon. Members talk of interests being represented in the House, when they allude to the landed interest, the commercial interest, the banking interest, the legal interest, and to that which is the particular object of their disgust, the liquor interest, I feel disposed to answer that the labour interest, in point of numbers, importance, and influence, is more strongly represented than any other interest in this House, and that there need be no fear that with the democratic character of modern constituencies the claims of labour will be for a moment neglected. The second question which should be answered is this—If you pass this resolution, and have payment of our Members, are we likely to have a better House of Commons than we have now? I remember the hon. Member for Longford (Mr. T. Healy) in one of his discursive midnight sallies once described the House of Commons as one of the most ignorant bodies in the world. I took that *cum grano Hibernico*, as I do everything that comes from those Benches, but for my own part I would far rather have unpaid ignorance than paid ignorance. I accept the challenge of hon. Members and refer with perfect readiness to the experience of foreign countries. It sometimes seems to me an unfortunate thing that a good many Members have not had the good luck to enjoy the opportunity of travelling abroad, or at least they talk as if they had not, or, if they have, as though they had their eyes shut. There is a favourite tendency in the minds of a good many to argue that any system in foreign countries must be better than that in our own, and that because payment of representatives is the practice in other countries, therefore, it must be superior to our own system. Now, I challenge the contradiction of any hon. Member when I make the statement that the status of a deputy in no single European country that you can name can be compared with the status of a Member of Parliament here. I will go further and include the United States of America. The hon. Member who spoke last seemed to me a little indiscreet in alluding to the work, the monumental and classical work of his colleague o then Front Bench (Mr. Bryce), for that hon. Member in his book points out clearly enough that the payment of Members of Congress in the United States was not introduced originally to enable working men to come into Congress, but on the theory that where there was public work done it ought to be paid for, and then he goes on to say—

> "The reasons in favour of payment are stronger than in England or France, because the distance from Washington is so great, and attendance is so continuous, that a man cannot attend to his profession or business while sitting in Congress."

Further he adds—

> "That when the Constitution was framed the number of persons with sufficient private means to put them above the need of a lucrative calling hardly existed, and is comparatively small now."

Finally he sums up—

> "The existence of the system in America furnishes no argument for its introduction into a small country with a large leisured and wealthy class."

These remarks coming from the hon. Gentleman who speaks with unrivalled opportunities of forming a judgment dispose of any attempt to establish an analogy between the position of the two countries. I said that the *status* of a Continental Deputy is not so high as that of a Member of Parliament, and what I say of the Continent I would repeat with still greater certainty of America. It is a truism that in America the best men abstain wholly, I will not say from political life, but certainly from Parliamentary life. Do not misunderstand me. I do not say that that is due soley to the fact of payment being made to Members. It is due to a variety of causes, it is due to the system of official corruption, it is due to the place hunting system, and to many other circumstances, but incidentally, among other causes, it is due to the payment of Members. Whether you may be disposed to regard the class of professional politicians with contempt or not, when you attach payment to Membership you place it on a like footing with the other professions and you make it an object that may be sought by the poor and deserving and by working-class representatives, but that will equally be the object of the idle, the necessitous, and the unscrupulous. This has happened in other countries, and it must happen here in England. Without any hesitation whatever I say in total opposition to what has been argued by the hon. and learned Member for Fife, that the great reason why in this country Membership of the House is looked upon with such respect is that the country knows that for the most part the men who come into this House have nothing whatever to gain financially, but that on the other hand, in many cases, their entrance is a loss to themselves. ["No, no."] I speak of the bulk of Members who have nothing whatever to gain and very often a good deal to lose; and whatever be the attractions of social prestige, the desire for personal distinction or the promptings of public ambition, so artistically depicted by the hon. and learned Member for Fife, however important these influences may be in drawing men to this House, certainly the majority of them do not come here as a means of pecuniary emolument, but as a matter of public duty and personal sacrifice. I hope that the House will not be in a hurry to throw away advantages which it has already in its possession, and which, like many others, may be partly the result of accident, though I believe here, as in many other cases, that a seeming accident may be found on analysis to involve the survival of the fittest.

*SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I have listened most carefully to the speech of the hon. Member who has just resumed his seat, but I do not find that he has used other than the old argument against this proposal. First, on the point of economy; slender as his argument was, I think he fell into a slight inconsistency. The Motion, he said, presented a suspicious appearance coming from the quarter of the House it did, and that Members there who were always trying to reduce the salaries of other people, now brought in a Motion to introduce payment of salaries to satisfy their own voracious stomachs. But, before he finished, he told my hon. Friend the Member for Wansbeck, he had fixed the salaries far too low, and that in his estimation an objection to the motion was, that the salary suggested would not be sufficient for the remuneration of the great services he considers—I do not say he included himself—but I mean services rendered to the country by attendance in this House. So that it seems to me while he accused the hon. Member for Wansbeck of making an extravagant demand, he himself objected to the Motion on the ground that the proposal was not sufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. The economical objection is a very slender argument. It was brought forward by the great Party of economy on the other side, that is, by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) who looks after the pounds, and the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Jennings) who looks after the pence. The answer to the argument used by that party of economy is that this £200,000 would probably be saved by the increased attention to business on the part of paid Members. It is quite true that a good deal of attention is now paid to the Estimates, but it is attention paid by a small and devoted band of Members, whose persistency is in inverse proportion to the amount of attention they receive. I believe, if a larger number of Members of the House took continuing interest in the discussions upon the Estimates, Ministers would feel there was a great body of public opinion behind Members, and that with far less expenditure of time, and greater economical results would be attained. Another argument has been used, that the payment of a salary would lower the character and position of a Member of Parliament, but this, I suppose, is not meant to apply to the present House, but to future Houses, for I conclude that every Member of the present House is equal to the test of standing the strain of a salary of £300. Neither do I think there is anything degrading in the fact of receiving a salary. If it is not a degrading thing in itself, then is there anything in the conditions of the work of a Member of Parliament that makes it undesirable he should receive a salary? If there is I have never heard these conditions properly defined. I have heard some vague talk about the necessity of the House being filled with men of leisure, means, and independence, and I admit that is to a certain extent desirable, but I do not admit what I think the argument is meant to imply, that because a man has leisure and because a man has means therefore he has also independence. Independence is not a monopoly of men of wealth and leisure, it exists among many classes other than those who have lands and property. It does seem to me sometimes in our excessive anxiety to make sure Members are men of leisure, we not only get the men who are by nature and habit leisurely outside the House but who introduce the nature and habit of leisure into business inside the House. The class of Members I think we want are men who by nature and habit could not be idle. If you have such a man then he must sacrifice something else to his attendance here, and I maintain that it is not unreasonable that some compensation should be given for the sacrifice of the time he would devote to work elsewhere. In fact, you cannot get this class of men admitted as freely into the House as the men of leisure and means are admitted until you introduce some compensation of this kind. I ask hon. Members who oppose this Motion to observe that this salary is not proposed by way of adequate remuneration, it is rather by way of indemnity for the trouble and expense to which a Member of the House is put by having to live in London and attend to his Parliamentary duties. It is quite true we shall have one difficulty if Members of the House are paid; accusations will be more frequently brought against candidates and Members of seeking to gain and hold the position from interested motives; and, I suppose, as long as politics exist, there will be natures which will delight to impute low and dishonourable motives to their fellows. But I am convinced that hon. Members who mean to oppose this Motion, conscious of their own integrity, will put an argument of that kind entirely on one side. Members of Parliament very soon learn to be above noticing imputations of motives, though they suffer from them, and we may abandon this objection; for it simply means that every Member of Parliament would feel it more incumbent upon him than he does now to be above suspicion altogether. In reference to professional politicians, I think the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Curzon) only looked at one side of the question as it presented itself to him—he considered who the men would be whom this change would admit into the House. But there is another question to be asked. Who are the men who, by your present condition of things, you are keeping out of the House? There is a class of men who monopolize—I hope and I think not, in fact but in name only—the title of labour representatives, of whom the hon. Member for Southport spoke with all respect. Why have we not more of these? The hon. Member for Southport brought forward a very curious reason why we have not more in the House, and that was the fact that one Member who was returned as a labour representative, and upon whom he passed some reflections that were uncalled for, had ceased to be a Member of the House, not being elected a second time. Now, I ask, may not the very fact that this Gentleman, who obtained admission to the House once was unable to obtain it a second time, may this not be a very fair argument why some change in the conditions should be introduced that would make access to the House more easy than it is now for men of his class? There is—I will not say another class—but other members of the same class, of whom we hear a great deal out of doors, but never meet a representative in this House—I mean the Conservative working men. Why should not the door of the House be thrown open to them? If it is open at the present time, then what is the obstacle that prevents them from appearing here? I, for one, am perfectly willing to do my best to have the obstacle removed. Then in regard to the character of Members. I would ask the House to consider how many constituencies there are at the present time in which men of known and tried character, and held in high estimation by their friends and neighbours, would naturally be selected as candidates, but who cannot come forward simply because they cannot afford the expense of coming to town and throwing up their local duties? How many constituencies who, in all respects but this, have a candidate ready to hand, have to accept a Member sent down from elsewhere—a man, perhaps, perfectly fitted to be a Member, but not intimately known to the constituents, as a man would be who lived among them. It is quite true we might have a certain rush of candidates, and that might confuse Party organization; but I think the burden of that inconvenience would fall more heavily upon the Liberal than on the Tory Party. The Tory Party have always been the Party of obstruction. ["Oh, oh!"] I do not use the word in its Parliamentary sense. I use it as opposed to construction. I will say that both Parties are Parties of progress, but that our progress has been more rapid and continuous than that of the Party opposite; and this leads me to the conclusion that I think it would be found that, in the increase of candidates, an undue proportion would be found standing on our side. When you are advancing fast it is much harder to keep your line even and unbroken than if you are waiting to receive a charge. But, after all, Party organization must take care of itself, and adapt itself to any change. I do not think it has any bearing on the merits of the question. What is the advantage to be gained? It is one that has been impressed upon me more strongly than ever by reading recent speeches of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain). He has lately inculcated most emphatically this doctrine—that outside the House of Commons people are only to seek redress for their grievances by efforts inside the House of Commons. It is to the House of Commons, said the right hon. Gentleman, the people outside must look for redress of all grievances; must place entire dependence on the House, and absolute confidence in the decision of the House. I agree that is a doctrine of great weight and importance; but if it is to carry the weight and importance it ought to carry with the country, then the choice of candidates by constituents for seats in the House must be as far as possible absolutely free. If they feel fettered in their choice they will refuse to pay that absolute, implicit, and unquestioning deference to the will of the House that the right hon. Gentleman wishes they should give. The hon. Member for Southport devoted part of his speech to the support of the Amendment given notice of by the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), declaring that if Members were to be paid the constituencies ought to pay them. I disagree entirely with that, and I think the hon. Member for Fife is right; it would introduce an invidious distinction, and would do more—far more than anyone has said this Motion would do—to destroy the independence of Members. If a Member were liable to have his salary granted or withheld or reduced according as he pleased his constituents, he would become the slave of the constituency; but I maintain that by granting the payment from the Consolidated Fund you make a man, not the slave of a particular constituency, but you make a Member of Parliament what he ought to be—the servant of the country at large. I think the constituencies may be trusted in the matter. My hon. Friend is asking the House to do a hard thing, and I have no doubt many Members see in their mind's eye half-a-dozen possible candidates ready to spring into existence in his own constituency, if only the means are supplied, and to whom he is asked to throw the door open. Well, I do not think a Member need fear if he stands on his own merits. No one who has attended large meetings throughout the country can possibly doubt that while constituencies often make mistakes as regards opinions and political views, and even as to the abilities or genius of a particular candidate they are seldom mistaken as to that man's moral character. Everyone who has attended large public meetings must have seen the man of earnestness and integrity get a hold and grip on the character of the audience not attained by the speeches of men who seem to be shallow in their earnestness or hollow in their convictions. If that is so, the logical outcome of our constitution is that a large choice of candidates should be open to constituents. That is a demand entitled to be made on the merits of the case. I for one have that confidence in the constituencies that I would not be afraid to trust them with a very extensive choice of candidates, believing that they would exercise that choice and that responsibility in the future, as in the past, with careful discrimination of the characters of the men who come before them.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Out of respect for the hon. Member who has brought forward his annual Motion, it is due that I should say a few words. The hon. Member who has just sat down concluded his speech with some observations that were somewhat at variance with what fell from his Friends who had preceded him. The constituencies, he said, could be trusted, from their fine moral sense of character, to discover if a candidate were actuated by motives above all personal considerations and superior to vulgar, selfish aims, and that they had exercised that faculty in the past. But according to the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division and the hon. and learned Member for Fife, apparently constituencies have not the skill to discover those persons who are looking simply to prestige and power, or whose sole object in coming to the House is to achieve personal distinction. Another set of men of whom, according to the hon. and learned Menber for Fife, the House is largely composed, are those who are open to the degrading imputation of seeking to gratify the most vulgar form of vulgar ambition. All these then must have escaped the fine sense of the constituencies of which the hon. baronet spoke, and I would therefore recommend him to consider his absurd proposition, that the adventurer who may be tempted by the proffered salary is certain to be instantly detected by those whose suffrage he solicits. The hon. Member, in introducing his Motion, again gave a long list of those who, being Members of the House, receive payment from the State in some form, and he included all Ministers of the Crown, all who receive official salaries, and also Naval and Military officers on half pay; and he assumes that these last receive this half pay for services in Parliament, inasmuch as they are discharging no other duty. This is an altogether preposterous proposition. Such public money as these officers receive is due to them for past professional services totally unconnected with their presence in this House, which does not set them free from liability to active service. The position of a Naval or Military officer in this House does not exempt him from service in his profession if the claims of duty require it from him. There are a certain number for whom the time of active duty has ceased, and the public money they receive is due to them for past services. It is a most extravagant exaggeration of facts to include these officers—any of them—as receiving half-pay for services in the House. Then the hon. Member said that industry and labour alone were saddled with taxation to get representation in the House. But what does a lawyer receive by way of remuneration for representing a constituency in Parliament? What does the commercial man receive? Where is the country gentleman that receives payment to induce him to come here and devote his time and attention to public affairs? It is quite clear that the principle the hon. Gentleman lays down has no general application at all. Another argument lies at the root of the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Fife, that unless you give salaries to poor men, poor men are practically incapacitated from entering Parliament at all, and so you limit the free choice of constituencies, preventing them from electing Members they would desire to elect. He says you add artificially to the natural influence of wealth. Well, I do not know whether his argument would not carry him much further. If it is the duty of the House to level the distinction between wealth and poverty, does the hon. and learned Member mean to contend that the payment of £375 will produce anything like a position of equality as regards candidature? Would this tempt a poor man to leave his profession, would this fill up the distinction of level between the rich man and one who is not blessed with equal fortune? The argument as to freedom of choice should be met by the constituency themselves giving their Member that which the hon. Member for Berwick calls an indemnity. Considerable skill and discretion have been shown by hon. Members who have conducted the debate from the other side in avoiding a difficult position that would arise. Of course there is a certain plausibility in saying that to enable a poor man to go to Parliament in discharge of a public duty you must give him such indemnity as will dispense him from the necessity of earning his livelihood by labour; but is that payment to be compulsory to those who do not want any such indemnity? I gather that the system is to be compulsory—that those who do not want it are to be forced to accept it, for the obvious reason that else you would establish an invidious distinction between paid and unpaid Members. But with what semblance of justice can you compel 570 Members of the House to receive a remuneration they do not want, in order to spare the feelings of the other hundred Members, who otherwise would dislike to take the remuneration they do want. I believe I am putting the figure rather high. I believe that if men had the option of being paid a remuneration under any possible set of circumstances likely to arise at any time, not nearly so many would come forward and claim the salary For various reasons the great majority of the House would decline, and so you would have this great principle introduced in order to gratify the choice of some few constituencies who sent Members to Parliament who did not want the salary. Then there is another material difficulty which Mover and Seconder have overlooked somewhat, and that is the provision of the money. I apprehend it is proposed to throw the charge on the Consolidated Fund, and, perhaps, hon. Members may consider this a trifling expenditure—this quarter of a million to carry out a Radical reform. This charge is to be thrown on the whole of the country, in order that some few Members may discharge the duties of their position with convenience to themselves. I do not think that this is altogether fair to the general body of taxpayers. I do not propose to enter into the various public and general considerations that arise in connection with the proposal; but let me just mention that the general rule and principle followed in this country has been hitherto that the greater part of our public work—I may say certainly a most important part—has been unpaid work.

MR. LABOUCHERE: That of Ministers?

*MR. MATTHEWS: The hon. Member is perfectly well aware that Ministers who receive a salary for their official work were for a long time excluded from this House, and it was only the consideration of the absolute necessity of having them here that led to their being permitted to have seats in the House. But I was saying a large amount of public work and most valuable work in the country is unpaid, and all the better done for being unpaid. I do not mean to say a line of distinction is easily drawn; I do not mean to say that administrative work can be discharged by unpaid services as effectively as can work such as that of Select Committees, for instance; but there is a vast deal of public work, useful work, performed at present without payment, for which, if you admit the principle of payment to Members of Parliament, you should, to apply the principle consistently, pay. We have just created a large number of County Councillors. Borough Councillors, of course, have existed for a long time—there are magistrates, sheriffs, jurors, and many others who discharge most important functions absolutely without remuneration. Can anyone say it is necessary to change the whole system by which this work has hitherto been done from a sense of public duty, and with, perhaps, a feeling of pride derived from the consciousness of doing good public service? Can anyone say the work would be better done if paid for? How far, too, should the principle of payment be extended? If you point to the example of foreign countries, where services of this kind without payment are absolutely unknown, I reply that it is pre-eminently a characteristic that distinguishes this country to its credit that there is a stronger display of public spirit. I deny that the poor man elected by a constituency as the best man they can find for their representative need be prevented by his poverty from sitting in the House. I do not want to enter into particulars; but instances will occur to many hon. Members where men who certainly might be described as poor have in different ways which I need not particularize found the means of discharging their duty as Members. I believe the means can always be found if a man is the free choice of a constituency. It would be invidious to select particular instances. Originally it was the custom of wealthy patrons to assist young men to enter the House, and I do not believe the modern democracy will be less generous than the patrons of old days. There will be no difficulty, where a man is selected as worthy of the confidence of a constituency, in providing him with the means of taking his seat. The argument that you will avert those evil consequences dreaded by hon. Members opposite, by converting unpaid into paid services, seems to me overstated, and not founded on experience. I do not say that, from the fact of being paid, a man necessarily receives less respect and social consideration, but, at any rate, the fact of there being no payment saves a Member from the suspicion of one more inducement added to those so eloquently enumerated by the hon. and learned Member for Fife. I do not say payment degrades a man—payment for good work never degrades—but I do say that the position of Members would be more open to suspicion, more open to the reproach that they were not earning their salary. This would be thrown in their teeth by the constituencies, and they would be called to account and reminded that they were expected to speak, not because they had something to say, but because they were paid to speak.

*MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): The right hon. Gentleman finds some inconsistency between the speeches of hon. Members on this side, but I do not think that any of us who advocate the payment of Members would affirm a proposition that constituents never make mistakes, and, indeed, under a system of payment of Members, it is not unlikely that selections may be as extraordinary in the future, in some cases, as they have been in the past. But one reason why selections have been unfortunate is that on our side, at all events, the limit of the field within which candidates can be selected is an extremely restricted one. By payment of Members you would have a much wider field of recruitment than at present. Hon. Gentlemen should, I think, take note of the fact that the wealth of the country is not so much found on our side as on theirs; and, therefore, I think they will admit that on this matter alone we are placed at some disadvantage in the matter of the selection of Members. Our candidates, in many respects, are hopelessly handicapped. The right hon. Member opposite mentioned the circumstance that some of the labour representatives in this House are returned under conditions which will be perpetuated; that is to say, their expenses being subscribed by their constituents. Well, I think he must see that Members who are now returned to the House with their expenses paid come here with their hands far more tied than they would under any system of payment by the country. They are far more pledged to the constituencies. It must be extremely difficult for an hon. Member who is returned to this House under such circumstances to give that free and independent vote which is so much desired in the best interests of the House, and without which your representative is very likely to become your delegate. The right hon. Gentleman referred to unpaid work as compared with paid work, and no doubt there is a great deal in the contention that so long as we can find proper men to do the work without pay, we do not require to pay for the work being done. But it does not follow that the paid men will not do the work better. In Scotland the Magistracy is paid, and no argument could induce the Scotch people to go back to the system of unpaid Magistrates, although the system is found to work well in England. I do not, like some hon. Members, attach much value to the historical precedents which have been brought forward; neither do I attach value to the precedents of foreign countries, although, as they are living compared with the others that are dead, they are entitled to more consideration. My hon. Friend the Member for Southport (Mr. Curzon) referred to the system of representation in the United States of America. For my own part, I am not so sure that Congress occupies so low a position as compared with our legislative system as is often assumed; and as to the cost to Congress men, if one enters into detail at all it is easy to prove that the cost of living in America is certainly double what it is in England, and on that ground alone there is reason for paying the representatives more than we would have to pay here. There is one matter in regard to the American Congress which should commend itself to public opinion in this country, and that is that the American House of Representatives is less than half as numerous as the present House of Commons. With the present unwieldy House of Commons no doubt the cost of paying Members will be very great, but I should hope that the passing such a Motion as this would act as a lever to induce the House to reduce the number of representatives and so establish a more effective Chamber. We, on this side, when we propose the large additional expenditure which would be involved in the payment of Members are taunted with our opposition to increased expenditure on the naval defences of the country; but in reply to that taunt I would point out that the Admiralty themselves are doubtful as to the expediency of this increase, as is shown in the contradictory statements of the First Lord from time to time. This proposed salary of £365 a-year is not meant to attract men within these walls, but if such a salary were paid to Members of Parliament, it would have the effect of enabling poorer men to come within the walls of this House if they wish to do so and constituencies wish to send them. So long as the working classes have not a free selection of candidates, there cannot be a real representation of the people. Under a system of payment I believe that we shall have a better House of Commons, and that we shall get more men who come here to work. I think that as constituencies have shown in the past that whenever good men come forward they have a good chance to get in, so they may be trusted to select good representatives under a system of payment. I do not think they are likely to accept any charlatan who comes before them without asking his former character. Of course there must always be some risk in dealing with new recruits, and with an unwieldy Chamber such as this, and my eyes are by no means shut to such a disadvantage; but I think it has been pointed out with sufficient clearness that this country having embarked on a system of democracy, we should endeavour to make it effectual, and I trust hon. Gentlemen opposite will join in making it so, instead of endeavouring to shirk the inevitable.

GENERAL GOLDSWORTHY (Hammersmith): I desire to say that my constituents do not wish Members to be paid. I believe that if any constituency wishes to be represented by any person who is unable to pay his own expenses they can easily make a collection and pay them for him. The hon. Member opposite would lead the House to suppose that a great number of the Members of the two Services in the House are on full pay. But, as a matter of fact, out of all the Service Members in the House there are only some two or three who are on full pay and eligible for employment. The others are on the retired list, and some, like myself, receive remuneration from the State for past services, and not on account of connection with the House. I shall on all occasions vote against the payment of salaries to Members of Parliament.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle): I do not propose to follow the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just sat down into any discussion with respect to naval and military pensions, and I have never felt that the practice prevailing over Europe, excepting in Italy and in the United States, is a strong argument in this matter. I believe that our own position is so peculiar historically, economically, and geographically, and differs so much from that of the United States or a country like France which has broken with its past, or a country like Germany, that we cannot found any strong argument on their action in this matter. But I am convinced that the subject is one in which the mass of our constituents, Conservative and Liberal, are taking an increasing and ever-deepening interest. It is absurd to pretend that by the mere extension of the franchise we are anxious to have in this House complete representation of all classes and sections of our society, if at the same time you narrow the latitude of choice by making it practically impossible for more than an extremely limited number of the working classes to find their way into the House. The Home Secretary, in language which surprised me very much, said—"Oh, there would be no difficulty at all in the case of a workman who could not provide or himself while in this House in providing means to secure his seat and to maintain him while occupying that seat." If that has been the experience of the right hon. Gentleman it is very different from my own personal observation. I believe there has been the greatest difficulty experienced in raising funds to pay the election expenses of what are called the labour representatives, and more difficulty still in obtaining funds to maintain them whilst in this House. I do not wish to refer to personal cases, but it is well known to all Members of this House that there are two labour representatives who, a year ago, were placed in circumstances to which great objection might fairly be taken by them or their friends, in consequence of the reluctance on the part of their constituents to continue the fund on which they had been led to rely. This is a matter of fact. I think the Home Secretary is mistaken as to the fact. The right hon. Gentleman says that this will mean an increase of taxation to the extent of about £300,000, and he says, fairly enough, that that would not in itself be a great recommendation of this proposal to the constituencies. The right hon. Gentleman seems to suppose that, while we advocate this proposal, we are not prepared to pursue a policy which, in other respects, will recoup the Exchequer for this outlay. But that is an expenditure which has been attacked, not very systematically as yet, but which is certain to be energetically attacked more and more, and which will be perfectly adequate to meet the demands proposed to be laid on the Exchequer. Then it is said that five-sixths of the Members of the House will refuse to receive the salaries. Well, I have never heard of the richest Peer in the Realm ever refusing to take his £5,000 a-year, or of any other Minister refusing to take his salary to the last farthing, and I think they are quite right. The sums paid to them by Parliament are in the nature of an indemnity for the sacrifice of time and professional advancement which a seat in Parliament details. On that ground I cannot give my assent to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Flintshire. It would be most invidious, and defeat the very object we have in view, to cast the charge upon the localities. For my part, I am going with greater confidence than before to vote for this proposal. The great political writer Mill, from whom I learnt and was glad to learn earlier ideas in politics, was strongly against this proposal. He said it would lead to the admission of a great number of sycophants and flatterers of the mob. Well, for some time I thought so too, but experience has shown that there is no force in it. I think with the hon. Baronet who spoke from this side of the House that we have now had considerable experience of elections taking place with a low franchise, and I appeal to any Member of this House whether in all these instances character has not had more to do with the election than a mere concurrence in the opinions of the constituency? The more free we make the choice, the wider we make it, the more likely is the constituency to choose a man who will not be a sycophant or a flatterer, and in whose independence we can have confidence. There are, no doubt, other reasons which make me vote for this proposal. It is perfectly clear that we are going to have in this House in the next few years most serious discussions pointing in the Socialist direction. If we want to meet the attacks, some passionate attacks against class legislation, depend upon it it is our interest to leave no stone unturned to make the choice of the electors as wide as possible, and make the access to this House as open as possible to every member of the community, however poor he may be. On these grounds I shall support the proposal.

*Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): As I understand I am precluded by the Rules of the House from moving the Amendment in my name, I should like to offer some general observations on the question before the House. At the outset, I would say that it is not without anxiety that I put myself in opposition to Members for whom I have so much respect. No Members have won a more honourable place than the "labour Members," and it is, therefore, with some hesitation that I speak against the proposal before the House. But I think this is a question which should not be decided merely on abstract considerations. This debate has, to some extent, been conducted upon abstract and logical considerations. But what weighs with me, and what I think will weigh with the House in the long run, is the larger and broader point of view—namely, what is best for the welfare of the country. The present proposal is one which would have very far-reaching effects. England, above all countries, has been distinguished for many years for the public spirit of its citizens. There is no other country in the world where there is anything like the amount of gratuitous, unpaid labour that there is here. Not only have we unpaid work in Parliament, but in the innumerable Boards scattered all over the country; our voluntary system has become a habit and tradition of the country; and I think this public spirit is the very salt of our social and political life. It keeps the administration of our affairs free from corruption; it maintains a high level and standard of duty such as I think you will find in no other country in the world. I do not think you can change the constitution of Parliament without affecting our public life at its very roots. To introduce the system of paid Members of Parliament will be to supplant the voluntary with the professional politician. And I cannot but remember what I have seen in other countries—the United States in particular—and I believe the introduction of paid Members would sooner or later lower the character of this House. You may depend upon it, Mr. Speaker, that if we have payment of Members of Parliament we shall soon have payment of Members in Town Councils and County Councils, School Boards and Boards of Guardians, the Magistracy, and all those public bodies with which the country is covered. This is, so to speak, the thin end of the wedge. We are discussing now, not merely the payment of a few hundreds of Members of Parliament, but we are discussing the ultimate payment of 10,000, or 20,000, or 30,000 persons holding public offices throughout the country and doing their work both honestly and gratuitously. What have been the consequences in other countries of the adoption of this course? We could not expect this country to escape from the degradation of politics which has taken place in France. And we all know what exists in the United States of America. It is urged that the adoption of payment of Members will bring a large number of working men's representatives into Parliament. I do not believe it. Where the system does exist we do not find that working men are elected. So far as I am aware, not a single working man sits at Washington at the present moment—at least, I have never heard of any; nor have I ever heard of any in France. ["Oh!"] It may be that there are, but I have never heard of any. I must confess, however, that I do not know so much of France as I do of the United States of America, where I spent some time as a young man, and where I never heard of a single case. My own opinion is that we have a larger number of working men in this Legislature than has any other Legislature. [Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS: No.] My hon. Friend says "No," but I shall be glad if he can prove that is not the case. I say the payment of Members of Parliament would tend to bring in not a larger number of working men, but a large number of place-hunters, men whom I must call self-seeking demagogues, who abound in those countries where payment of Members exists. Will the House permit me to give an account of my impressions formed when, as a young man, I visited the United States. At that time the state of politics was simply deplorable, and I ask the attention of the House to what I witnessed both before after the Civil War. I do not believe and that in any country or in any age corruption attained to such enormous dimensions as it then did in New York, New Orleans, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and, indeed, in most of the large cities of America. In most of the State Legislatures and the National Legislature, the state of politics and of public life was also very bad. In New York, municipal affairs were entirely under the control of what was called the Tammany ring. A parcel of scoundrels, a set of thieves, got entire possession of the municipal government, and in the course of a very few years these men stole out of the

City Treasury the sum of £4,000,000 sterling. These men were all attracted to politics as a money-making profession. In ten years the public debt of New York was raised from 20,000,000 to 100,000,000 dollars; and the taxation, which early in the century was ½ per cent on the value of property, rose to more than 2½ per cent per annum on the capital value of the property. That is to say, that supposing house property on the average yielded 5 per cent, the taxation represented 50 per cent. of the income. I believe, as a matter of fact, the owners of mortgages in New York did pay 50 per cent. This enormous amount was necessary to make up the defalcations and *laches* of those scoundrels who embezzled the finances of the City. There was more or less the same state of things in every large city in the country, and it existed to a great extent at Washington itself. I have often been asked why the citizens did not make an effort to overcome this state of things, and to get affairs into their own hands. Good citizens did make very strenuous efforts, and after striving laboriously for years and years with scant success, they did at length succeed in turning out the Tammany ring; but I believe that since then many of the abuses have again sprung up. When I was in New York, there were corrupt Judges in the pay of these men, who were dismissed years afterwards, and who had acquired large fortunes out of their disgraceful practices. Now, Sir, allusion has been made to-night to the admirable work of the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce's "American Commonwealth.") I have had great pleasure in reading through the greater part of that work; and I believe it will be the standard book on America for many years to come. I would like hon. Members to listen to a little extract which I am about to read. Mind you, Mr. Speaker, this is the deliberate conclusion come to by my hon. Friend after repeated visits to the United States during some twenty years, and with the most perfect knowledge of the American system of politics which I venture to think has been acquired by any Englishman:—

"Politics has now become a gainful profession, like advocacy, stockbroking, the dry goods trade, or the getting up of companies. People go into it to live by it, primarily for the sake of the salaries attached to the places they count on getting. Secondarily, in view of the opportunities it affords of making incidental and sometimes illegitimate gains. Every person in a high Administrative Post, whether Federal, State, or Municipal, and, above all, every member of Congress, has opportunities of rendering services to wealthy individuals and companies for which they are willing to pay secretly in money or in money's worth. The better officials and legislators—they are the great majority, except in large cities—resist the temptation. The worst succumb to it, and the prospect of these illicit profits renders a political career distinctly more attractive to an unscrupulous man."

That is the state of things at the present moment in America. Some say that an improvement has taken place. I believe that improvement is very slow indeed. Now, what I assert is, tha like causes produce like effects, and what you see in America to-day you would probably see in England 50 years hence if you introduced a similar system of paid representatives. I have observed that whatever custom, fashion or abuse finds a place in America sooner or later becomes acclimatized here, and after a certain number of years affects us as it affected the people there. Now, as we are aware that in America the system of paid professional politicians has led to these abominable abuses, I say that, in the course of time, when full opportunity has been given to work out the system in this country, we shall see similar effects here. Parliament is now free from corruption; but, with paid Members, we should, 20, or 30, or 50 years hence, when the present Leaders of Party had been taken away, see a very different state of things. In Washington's time the American Republic began on virgin soil, and it had statesmen of the highest character at the head of affairs. It took 50 years of the professional politician system to entirely change all that. I say that after we have had a generation of paid Members, under the same conditions as in America, there is too much reason to believe the same fruits will be produced in this country. Just conceive what it will be to put into the hands of a body of professional politicians, largely living by politics, the control of £120,000,000 of local and Imperial taxation! Consider what would be the consequences of entrusting to Committees drawn from this class Private Bill legislation involving enormous sums. Take as an illustration the Manchester Ship Canal. There was an enterprize dealing with £8,000,000 of money; it was promoted as determinedly on the one side as it was opposed on the other, and each side spent some £100,000 or more in Parliamentary expenses. The decision was left to a small Committee of five Members; and we have never had a suggestion or a whisper as to the honesty or uprightness of those members. But go to the United States, and you will find in respect of such undertakings that each side provides a large amount for "blackmailing," and if it wishes to carry a Bill, it will have to disburse heavily from this Secret Service fund. This Secret Service fund is disbursed to a large extent among members of the Committees. It is a notorious fact that it is almost impossible for any great Corporation in America to carry through its work without putting aside a large amount of money for "lobbying," and for secret and unavowed purposes. There is a class called "lobbyists" in America, whose profession it is to get through Bills. They receive large sums of money of which they give no public account, for it is perfectly well understood that they could not be publicly vouched for. I see from the accounts of one railway quoted in this book (Mr. Bryce's) that it had put aside no less than 4,800,000 dols. for this Secret Service Fund, or nearly a million sterling, in the last few years. Will the House permit me to read a short extract from my hon. Friend's book on this system of lobbying|? It is well that we should know something about this system, which may some day migrate to this country; and from what I saw during the time I resided in America, I can vouch for the truth of every word of what I am about to read:—

"The doors of Congress are besieged by a whole army of commercial or railroad men and their agents, to whom, since they have come to form a sort of profession, the name of 'Lobbyists' is given. Many Congress men are personally interested, and 'lobby' for themselves among their colleagues from the vantage ground of their official positions. That the capital and the hotels at Washington are a nest of such intrigues and machinations while Congress is sitting, is admitted on all hands; but how many of the members are tainted no one can tell."

How long, I ask, could you keep such a system out of England if you once admitted the professional class of politicians? I hold that it is true patriotism to face these facts, and take due cognizance of them, rather than rush into a change of which many are unable to estimate the ultimate consequences, and not improbably the majority of those who now promote it will, in the end, deeply regret their share in its introduction. Under our present political system, although there is far too much of party bitterness, there are few countries in the world in which politicians are so free from the charge of corruption, or where such a thing as the acceptance of a bribe by a Member of the Legislature, is so absolutely unknown. This was not always the case; but happily it has now become so, and I say that this immunity from political venality is to us a priceless possession. There is, however, an increasing tendency to widen the area of politics and to suck into their vortex one interest after another. Among other evidences of this I have been sorry to observe the tendency that has been exhibited of late to identify the heads of the Civil Service Departments with party politics. This is what, more than aught else, has been the ruin of the American system. In that country, whenever the Government changes hands upwards of 100,000 officers employed in the Service of the State are turned out to make room for the adherents of the victorious party. I believe that not quite so extensive a clearance has accompanied the latest change of Government; but still, the system as it now exists is a detestable one and utterly destructive of anything like good or honest government. The men who obtain office under such a system know that they must feather their nests in a short time—about four years at most—and the consequence is that they too often contrive, in one way or another, to carry on the feathering process with more or less success —some of them going into office poor, and coming out rich men. If the working of the political machinery of this country were placed in the hands of professional politicians like these, do you not think the time will come when they will use the power with which they may be invested in the same manner as is the case in America? The temptation would be found irresistible. It would be too much for our poor human nature; for, after all, we are made of the same clay as the Americans. Both are of the Anglo-Saxon race, and it would be assuming a great deal too much to say that the evils which now occur in America could not occur here. I hold that if we are placed in the same position we will witness similar results. The fact is that the American "machine," as it is called, is worked from top to bottom by a class of men who try to make as much out of it as they can. My hon. Friend, the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has given us a description of this "American machine," the working of which is an illustration of what comes from handing over the political power of the country to unscrupulous politicians who intend to make money out of it. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "Oh, oh!"] I say to those hon. Members who cry "Oh!" that anyone who knows anything about the working of the political machinery of America will testify to the fact that, to a large extent, the political business of that country is put into the hands of men who would not be trusted in this. Here is what the hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen says about the American machine:—

> "Observing the forms of consulting the voters, it substantially ignores them, and forces on them persons whom they do not know, and would dislike if they knew them. It substitutes for the party voters generally a small number of professionals and their creatures, extracts pre-arranged, nominations, from packed meetings, and calls this consulting the pleasure of the sovereign people . . . . It is less trouble to put up with impure officials, costly city government, a jobbing State legislature, an inferior sort of Congressman, than to sacrifice one's own business in the effort to set things right. Thus the machine works on and grinds out places, power, and the opportunities for illicit gain to those who manage it."

These "machines" are worked by a person called the "Boss," who discharges the function of pulling the wires. Now, with us the wire-puller is, as a rule, free from corrupt motives—although a strong partizan; but in most of the States in America, the man who controls the party machine, who pulls the strings and gives the bias to the side to which he belongs, is this so-called "Boss," of whom Mr. Bryce says:—

> "It must not be supposed that the members of Rings, or the great Boss himself, are wicked men. They are the offspring of a system. Their morality is that of their surroundings. They see a door open to wealth and power and they walk in. The obligations of patriotism or duty to the public are not disregarded by them, for these obligations have never been present to their minds."

I need not read more; but I would repeat, that if you make politics a gainful profession you will soon find that you have commenced the descent of a steep gradient and will be unable to stop until you have landed yourselves in the quagmire of the American system, the motto of which is "The spoils belong to the victors." I have been quoting from the ablest book on America that has been published in our time—a book which is regarded as a masterpiece in America. Besides this, I wish to remind the House that I have many relatives and friends in America, and that in what I am saying I speak of that which I personally know. I hope the House will not suppose that I am attacking the great American nation. I am one of those who esteem and honour the Americans, and I have said nothing which most of my American friends would not say themselves or have not already said to me times out of number. I feel assured that if you had some of them in this House to-night they would say exactly what I have said, and would add that they groan under their existing political system and wish to Heaven they could alter it; but that it is coiled around them in such a way that it is impossible to unwind the coils. We in this country would be crushed under so demoralising a system; but America has such enormous resources that the people do not feel anything like the pressure we would have to endure. They have nothing like the mass of poverty nor the congested populations we have in this country, and we cannot afford to make such experiments as the Americans are able to indulge in. In spite of the political corruption prevalent in their midst, the Americans are a most energetic, active, and prosperous people, they have resources which we do not possess; we cannot afford to play the pranks or run the risks they have no hesitation in encountering, and the Americans are, consequently, able to flourish under a state of things that would be ruinous to an old crowded country like ours. There is much more excuse for the system of paying Members in America than here; they have not the leisured class we have, neither have they the same amount of public spirit as animates the class from which, in this country, our legislators are derived. You do not see first-rate men in America applying themselves to politics as we do here, and I, for one, doubt very much whether it would be possible to govern America without a system of payment running from top to bottom. Here, however, there is no necessity for such a state of things. There is no difficulty in any English constituency in finding men ready to become candidates for Parliamentary honours, to serve any office they might be entrusted with, or even to devote their whole lives to their legislative duties gratuitously. Nevertheless, I can fully sympathise with the motion of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Fenwick); and if I could see some *via media* whereby it would be possible, in a limited number of cases, to provide payment for a certain proportion of poor men who might be elected as Members of this House, I should be willing to accept such a proposal. But I do not think we would find 50 Members of this House who really desire to be paid; and, putting aside the representatives of the working-class, I very much doubt whether there are more than 20 or 30 British Members who have this desire. I put it to the House, therefore, is it desirable that we should thrust on the enormous majority of unwilling Members a payment which is only demanded in the interests of a very small number? As I fear I have already occupied too much of the time of the House, I will now conclude. I would merely add that the view I have put forward is that entertained by the great Tribune of the people whose eulogium we have this evening heard pronounced from both sides of the House. The late Mr. John Bright was opposed to the payment of Members of Parliament. I hope that the House will not abandon the system of gratuitous and voluntary service, but that it will keep up the standard of English public life, and hand down to posterity the priceless boon of an incorruptible Parliament.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I think that a constituency have a perfect right if they consider a man is indispensable to them, to pay him for being here. But my own constituency does not take the view that its representative should be paid. The hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division (Mr. Fenwick) seemed to think that there are sailors and soldiers in the House who have an unlimited draw upon the public purse. I have served in the Army myself, but that has nothing to do with my presence in the House, and the same may be said of nine out of ten of the admirals and officers who have seats in it. The payment of members in Victoria is not likely to add strength to the hon. Member's argument, and as for the United States, I believe that the system is becoming decidedly unpopular. If we are to pay Members of Parliament I do not see why we should not also pay town councillors, county councillors, and even magistrates. Members will be in an extremely unfortunate condition if on going back to their constituents they tell them that, although they have not been able to induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take a penny off the Income Tax, or have not succeeded in reducing the Estimates, they have secured for themselves £365 or £500 a year a piece. It seems to me that the real solution of the question is not payment of Members while in the House, but the facilitating of the entrance of Members to the House by reducing as far as possible the enormous initial expenses, and providing State system of registration of electors.

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present; House was counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Twenty-five
minutes before Nine o'clock,
till Monday next.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 11.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 9.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 1*st April*, 1889.

COMMISSION.

The following Bill received the Royal Assent:—Consolidated Fund (No. 2.)

NEW PEER.

E. Cromartie—Francis Sutherland-Leveson-Gower Baron Macleod, Baron Castlehaven, Viscount Tarbat, and Earl of Cromartie, having succeeded to these titles on the death of his mother Anne, Duchess of Sutherland, by virtue of a special limitation contained in a Patent bearing date the 21st day of October, in the 25th year of the reign of Her present Majesty, was (in the usual manner) introduced.

INDECENT ADVERTISEMENTS BILL. (NO. 34).

A Bill to suppress indecent advertisements—Was presented by The Lord Chaworth (E. Meath); read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next.

SMOKE NUISANCE ABATEMENT (METROPOLIS) BILL. (NO. 13.)

To be read 2ª on Thursday the 11th instant.—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

TWEED FISHERIES.

Return regarding the lower waters and upper waters of the Tweed respectively; of the Tweed Commissioners on the roll in 1888, qualified as such under Section X. of the "Tweed Fisheries Act, 1857," distinguishing those qualified in respect of fishings in the main river of Tweed from those qualified in respect of fishings in any of its tributaries, and naming any such tributary; also stating the number of votes to which each Commissioner was entitled under Section XXII. of the same Act; ordered to be laid before the House.—(*The Earl of Minto.*)

House adjourned at half-past Four o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 1*st April*, 1889.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

Order for Committee read and discharged.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Bill be committed to a Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection; that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records; that Three be the quorum."—(*Mr. Courtney.*)

MR. W. P. SINCLAIR (Falkirk Burghs): Notwithstanding the different form of the Motion which stands on the paper in the name of the hon. Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth), the Constitutional objection raised the other day still remains, that this is foisting into a small Administrative Bill an instruction of a wide-reaching nature. The proposal of the promoters of the Bill was simply to add to the duties of the ordinary Committee appointed to consider the Bill an inquiry into two questions raised by the hon. Member for Manchester, and no slur was intended to be cast upon the Committee, although the hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees used the expression that a limited instruction of that nature would be lame and impotent. We believed that we had met the views of our opponents. We believed in the honesty of their statements, and therefore we adopted the course we did. A Whip was issued on behalf of the opponents and signed by the hon. Member for Manchester and others, in which they asked solely for investigation and inquiry, and did not refer to legislation. I hold that Whip in my hand, and it says that the object of the Instruction is to enable the Committee to inquire whether some modification in the convening and election of the Board is not necessary in order to enable the electors freely to exercise their functions. There is not one word in it as to legislation. I also hold in my hand the statement of a Municipal Corporation represented by the hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. W. L. Bright), in which there is reference to inquiry only and not to legislation. We still think that inquiry should precede legislation, if inquiry is to be instituted now, but if inquiry and legislation are to go together, then we are of opinion that it would be better they should be done in the ordinary way, with the ordinary Parliamentary safeguards, necessitated by the introduction of a Bill, due notice of which is required to be given in the month of November. I do not, however, oppose the Instruction or the Motion of the Chairman of Ways and Means, but I think it is only right on the part of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board that I should enter this protest against the course proposed to be taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

*SIR W. N. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I am quite willing merely formally to move this Instruction, especially as the hon. Gentleman opposite says he is prepared to assent to it; But I am very much tempted to reply to some of the remarks of the hon. Gentleman with regard to our original intention of inquiring into the matter only. We always contemplated Legislation, and Legislation by means of the Bill that is now before the House. No doubt we were willing that there should be a full inquiry before any alteration was made in the Clauses of the Bill, and we were exceeding anxious that those who were opposed to the views we hold should have every facility given to them by the Instruction to appear before the Committee. Our main and primary object was to raise the whole question before the Committee which is to sit upon the Bill, but we never contemplated allowing the matter to rest there if the Committee were of opinion that a legislative alteration was necessary. In that case the Committee ought undoubtedly to have power to make an alteration without the matter being hung up for another year. If the Committee approve of the alteration we suggest it would be manifestly absurd to allow the matter to stand over until a fresh Bill could be brought in simply to add three words to the present Bill and to alter the figure 10 to 50. Those are all the alterations that are required if our views are sustained, and I venture to think that my hon. Friend is taking the right course in accepting this Instruction as a matter that can be fairly fought out upstairs. Our only desire is to place this trust upon such a basis as to give to every elector the fullest opportunity of exercising the franchise which has been conferred upon him. One word more. There is an impression that this is a question which has been raised by the inhabitants of Manchester from a feeling of jealousy towards Liverpool. There is no ground for that impression, and the Chairman of Committees, who seemed to think that there was some feeling of jealousy between the two towns, is entirely mistaken. It is not the case of Manchester endeavouring to get hold of something which belongs to Liverpool. For I hold in my hand a Liverpool paper called the *Journal of Commerce*, which, I presume, represents the views of commercial men in that town, and which expresses a strong opinion that in regard to the expansion of the present resources of the Trust, and enlarging its present sphere of usefulness, there is very great room for improvement. This journal also says that "many people who have watched the proceedings of the Board, are of opinion that economy is not as well studied as it ought to be." It will, therefore, be seen that this is not in any respect a question of rivalry between two great and important towns, but a public question which ought to come before the National Legislature. I beg to move the Instruction which stands in my name upon the paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill that they have power to inquire whether or not any modifications of the constitution or mode of election of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board may be necessary or expedient, and to make provision for the same accordingly; and that all Petitions against the said Bill already presented, and all Petitions which may be presented not later than seven clear days before the sitting of the Committee, relating to matters raised in paragraph 16 of the joint Petition of the Manchester Corporation and others, be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitioners."—(*Sir W. H. Houldsworth.*)

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): On the last occasion when this question was before the House, the great interest that is taken in it not only by Manchester but by all the large towns in Lancashire, was shown by the presence in the Lobby of many of the Mayors and town clerks of corporate boroughs, who would not have been there if it had not been for the interest felt in the matter by those whom they represented. I wish altogether to repudiate the suggestion which was then made by hon. Members who represent Liverpool, that the directors and shareholders of the Manchester Ship Canal Company wish to some extent to steal a march upon Liverpool by obtaining an alteration of the provisions of the present Bill. I repudiate it, because the question of voting by proxy and enlarging the area from which the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board are to be chosen was one which attracted considerable attention long before the Manchester Ship Canal Scheme had any chance of being carried out. The great object in view has been to strengthen and increase the representation of districts other than Liverpool. At the present moment I believe there is only one member of the Dock Board who resides at any distance from Liverpool, and he is the representative of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. I trust that the House will support the Instruction which has been moved by my hon. Colleague.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Bill that they have power to inquire whether or not any modifications of the constitution or mode of election of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board may be necessary or expedient, and to make provision for the same accordingly; and that all Petitions against the said Bill already presented, and all Petitions which may be presented not later than seven clear days before the Sitting of the Committee, relating to matters raised in paragraph 16 of the joint Petition of the Manchester Corporation and others, be referred to the Committee; and that such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in favour of the Bill against such Petitioners.

ROYAL ASSENT.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went—and being returned—

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 2) Act, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

RESULTS FEES.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the rule prohibiting the teaching of agriculture in mixed schools out of school hours dates from 29th February, 1888; if so, is not Mr. L. Ryan, Trooperstown National School, entitled to be paid results fees for the ten months he taught prior to that date, and will steps be taken to pay him?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The Commissioners of National Education inform me that so far back as 18th August, 1887, Mr. Ryan acknowledged in writing that he had received a copy of the Board's rules, which copy contained a specific direction that if boys and girls in a mixed school are taught agriculture, the instruction must be given wholly within the ordinary school hours; and, further, the teachers were distinctly informed that all pupils examined on or after the 1st March, 1888, would be examined in accordance with the new rule. The school of Mr. Ryan was examined in May, 1888, and, notwithstanding the express directions issued to him, he had failed to carry them out. In these circumstances the Commissioners are unable to pay him results fees.

IRELAND—DEFECTIVE POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork, W.) asked the Postmaster General whether a great increase had taken place in the number of letters distributed at Bauravilla (near Skibbereen); whether representations have reached him that the present postal delivery is defective and causes much inconvenience to the inhabitants of the district; and whether he will cause a sub-post office to be opened at Bauravilla?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): The correspondence for Bauravilla is very small in amount, and I am afraid that there has been no increase since the question of the Postal Service was last examined. Applications have been made to me for an improvement of the service, but the cost of the present arrangements already exceeds the revenue, and I regret that I am unable to increase the existing deficiency by going to the expense of establishing a Post Office at Bauravilla.

MALICIOUS DAMAGE.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he was aware that a ridge of cabbages, measuring 100 yards, belonging to Daniel Shanahan, residing near Tralee, was maliciously mowed down last week; whether Daniel Shanahan had refused to vote for a popular candidate at an election for a Poor Law Guardianship; what is the estimated value of the ridge of cabbages; and whether any arrests have been made.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that it is the case that on the night of the 18th or morning of the 19th March, a ridge of cabbage plants measuring about 100 yards in length, the property of a respectable farmer named Daniel Shanahan, was maliciously destroyed. The plants were cut to the roots apparently with a scythe. It is the case that Mr. Shanahan had refuse to vote for a popular candidate for the office of Poor Law Guardian. The estimated value of the plants is £6. No person has been so far made amenable; but the police are still engaged in making inquiries.

BOYCOTTING.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention had been called to the following extract from the charge of Baron Dowse, published in the *Freeman's Journal* of the 12th March—

> "I am also informed by the proper authorities, who can speak with confidence on these matters, that the crime of boycotting has decreased of late; that whereas there were some years ago several hundreds of persons in the county boycotted, the number is very considerably decreased, and in the month of January of this present year the agrarian outrages in Kerry only amounted to five in number, as compared with a very considerable number in former years. Well, now, I am very glad to be able to say that there is a decrease in the number of boycotting offences. The number of persons boycotted in February 1888 was 131, and now the number is only 33."

Whether he was aware that similar statements regarding the decrease of crime have been made by the Judges in every county in Ireland; and if it would be possible to lay the charges of the Judges at the Spring Assizes upon the Table of the House?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: My attention has been called to the learned Judge's address at the late Spring Assizes with regard to the large decrease in boycotting and agrarian crime in the county Kerry. It is likewise the case that in other counties in Ireland, where the Judges at the late Assizes have commented on crime, they have also been able to congratulate the people in regard to its decrease among them. The course suggested in the last paragraph would, if feasible, doubtless afford some interesting information and light with respect to the considerably improved state of affairs throughout Ireland; but, inasmuch as there is no official record of the addresses of Judges of Assize, it has been the practice not to lay them upon the Table of this House.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA—SIR F. NAPIER BROOME.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government had come to any decision as to the termination of Sir F. Napier Broome's appointment as Governor of Western Australia at the close of his six years of office in June next?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron HENRY DE WORMS, Liverpool, Toxteth): Her Majesty's Government do not intend to advise the Queen to extend Sir F. Napier Broome's term of employment as Governor of Western Australia for any definite period, but he may have to remain there for some time beyond the 2nd June next, if his successor cannot arrive by that date.

CHIEF JUSTICE ONSLOW.

MR. CHANNING asked the Under Secretary for State for the Colonies whether any, and, if so, what decision had been come to by the Executive Council of Western Australia in the case of the Petition against Chief Justice Onslow referred to them some time ago?

BARON H. DE WORMS: No decision has been come to by the Governor and Executive Council; but the Governor has reported that he has laid the papers on the case before the Legislative Council.

MR. CHANNING: Am I rightly informed that the papers have been sent to the Colonial Office for decision?

BARON H. DE WORMS: Yes; that is correct.

THE WELSH SUNDAY CLOSING ACT

MR. ARTHUR WILLIAMS (Glamorgan, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government had decided whether the inquiry into the working of the Welsh Sunday Closing Act would be made by Select Committee or by a Royal Commission; and when the inquiry would be entered upon?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The Government have decided that the inquiry shall be by means of a Royal Commission. The inquiry will commence as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made.

THE NAVAL PROGRAMME.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is with his sanction, as intimated in the *Times* of 23rd March, that the designs of the new battle ships, upon which it is proposed to spend many millions sterling of public money, are to be referred to the Institution of Naval Architects at its next ordinary meeting for consideration and discussion, and for the settlement of certain doubts entertained respecting them; whether he is aware of the published statement that the meeting in question, which will probably comprise, as usual, many non-professional visitors, is "a competent and technical body" for such a purpose; and whether he will consent to substitute for the proposed semi-public meeting a carefully constituted Commission or Committee, composed of scientific, naval, and other persons, possessing suitable means for carrying out the necessary investigations?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I have no intention of referring the designs of the new battleships to the Institution of Naval Architects for approval or rejection, as the question suggests, but with my permission Mr. W. H. White, the Director of Naval Construction, proposes at the next meeting of the Institution to read a paper explanatory of these designs, and in reply to certain allegations made concerning them in the public Press. A Commission on the design of war ships has more than once been appointed. In every case it has led to great delay, expense, and unsatisfactory compromises, for which no one is individually responsible. I am not disposed to repeat the experiment, especially as the Naval Lords and the Service generally have thorough confidence in the capacity and experience of the Director of Naval Construction, Mr. W. H. White, as a designer of warships.

SIR E. J. REED (Cardiff): May I ask the noble Lord if he has any objection to my seeing the designs of the ship before they are discussed before the Institution of Naval Architects?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Certainly.

Sir E. J. REED: Does the noble Lord mean yes or no?

***Lord G. HAMILTON**: No; certainly not.

IRELAND—MOONLIGHTING.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been called to the following statement, which appeared in the *Daily Express* on 21st March:—

> "The townland of Doora, near Ennis, was on Tuesday night the scene of a serious moonlighting raid. The houses of a number of farmers in the district to whom Poor Law voting papers had been distributed the previous day were visited by a party of men partly disguised, carrying sticks, who demanded the papers; the houses of two farmers named M'Inerney were first visited, next that of John Heffernan, from all of whom the papers were taken. Pat Lawlor's was next visited, but here Lawlor and his son were prepared for the moonlight visitors, who promptly decamped. At the house of Michael Lawlor the raiders met with a stubborn resistance, and in the melée Lawlor got a deep cut on the head. The raiders were here baffled in their object. In all, the papers were taken from six houses. A very bitter contest is being conducted in the electoral division of the Poor Law Union of Ennis; the candidates are Mr. Paul Skehan, Secretary to the Branch of the National League formerly existing at Doora, and Mr. John Lynch, and the houses which were raided belong to the supporters of the latter."

Whether any arrests had since been made; and whether he would take steps to prevent any interference with the freedom of election at Doora?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the facts are substantially as stated in this question, but that, so far as the police are aware, the number of houses visited was five. The raid was made at about midnight on 19th March. Two of the farmers surrendered their voting papers at once upon their being demanded, a third refused to do so, but upon three of his windows being completely smashed from outside, his wife, to prevent further injury, surrendered the paper. When the house of Lawlor was broken into he resisted, receiving a cut on the head by being struck with a stick, the wound, however, not being serious. He forced a hatchet from one of his assailants while the other men were engaged in breaking his windows. They had, however, to leave without his paper, and they were equally unsuccessful at his brother's house. The object of the raid was to prevent these farmers from voting against Mr. Skehan, the secretary of the late local branch of the National League, printed notices having been posted on the doors and houses of several of the voters calling upon them to support the League candidate. No person has been so far made amenable. The intimidation has proved ineffectual, the other candidate, Mr. Lynch, having been elected, I understand, by a majority of 30 votes.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that moonlighting was unknown in Clare until his policy was introduced?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe that Clare has distinguished itself in every variety of agrarian crime.

PENSIONS—MODE OF PAYMENT.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) asked the Postmaster General whether he would consider the advisabilty of adopting some plan by which pensioners may be enabled to draw their pensions weekly or monthly through the machinery supplied by the Post Office?

***Mr. RAIKES**: The hon. Member does not specify the particular pensions to which he refers. As regards weekly pensions, I may say that some short time ago the Treasury expressed itself averse to the payment of pensions weekly which is necessarily a very expensive arrangement.

IRELAND—FENIT PIER.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the proceedings before the last Kerry Grand Jury, when an application made by the cesspayers of the barony of Irraghticonnor, to have the necessary steps taken to investigate the expenditure of £95,000 obtained for the purpose of erecting a pier at Fenit was refused by a majority of 10 to 8; whether he is aware that by the direction of the previous Grand Jury, the opinion of eminent counsel had been obtained in the matter, which stated that several thousand pounds had been misapplied by the Harbour Board; whether that opinion was laid before the present Grand Jury before they came to their decision; whether some of the members of the Grand Jury who voted against the proposed investigation were also members of the Harbour Board and, if so, how many; whether, under the circumstances, he will direct the Board of Works, from whom the loan was obtained, to hold a public inquiry into the manner in which the £95,000 has been expended, and to ascertain whether the pier has been completed according to the original contract and specification; whether sheds and cranes as provided for by the specification have been erected; and whether the condition laid down by instructions from the Lord Lieutenant at the time when the ratepayers were asked to sanction the loan, viz., that no portion of the loan should be allocated to the canal or any other purpose than the erection of the pier, has been strictly adhered to?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I am afraid that I can add nothing to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for North Meath on Friday last; the matter has not been brought officially before the Treasury or the Commissioners of Public Works.

TITHE DISTRAINTS.

MR. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he had received any information as to the conduct of the police at Tredafydd Farm, in the parish of Penbryn, during the tithe distraints there on 19th March; whether it was the fact that the police charged and batoned the peasants, who had given no other cause of offence than lighting a bonfire; and whether three of the police set upon and beat, amongst others, an old man who had made no sort of disturbance or threatened any resistance? He also asked who was the Superintendent of Police who supplied to the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire the information that the peasants of Penbryn were determined to ill-use the bailiffs employed to levy tithe distraints on 19th March last; at what date such information was given; and whether it was given in writing?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Chief Constable that during the distraints for tithe at Penbryn on the 19th ult., on approaching a farm called Tredafydd, he saw a large volume of smoke issuing from the yard, and before the police reached the place a volley of stones was thrown at them from the direction of the smoke. On entering the premises the police were attacked with pitchforks, several of which were taken from the crowd, and a man with a knife in his hand was also seized by the police. The Chief Constable is not aware that any old man was beaten by the police, but some of the crowd were injured in the scuffle. I will, if the hon. Member wishes it, give him privately the name of the superintendent who gave the information referred to. The information is in writing, and is dated the 16th of March, 1889.

IRELAND—FATHER FARRELLY.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention had been drawn to the report that, on the Rev. Father Farrelly going, on Wednesday evening, to the police barrack in Arklow to surrender himself to the police, accompanied by his parish priest, the Rev. James Dunphy, Constable Sackwell caught Father Farrelly by the throat, in the presence of an excited multitude; had he received any Report of the reasons given by the police for batoning the people on this occasion, wounding eight men; and, what steps did he intend to take to inquire into the occurrence?

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): May I ask, before the right hon. Gentleman replies, if it is the case that the Rev. Father Farrelly went to the barrack in an excited state, considerably under the influence of drink, and seizing hold of the bell-rope, commenced to ring the bell in order to attract the people; and whether any further force was used than was necessary in order to prevent the rev. gentleman from ringing the bell?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The facts are as follow: Father Farrelly had, it is true, written to the Constabulary stating that he would surrender himself; but he at one time appeared unwilling to do so, and therefore it was that his house was broken open with a view to his arrest. The house was barricaded, and the police were within their legal right in what they did. It is not true that, upon the occasion of Father Farrelly going to the police barracks to surrender himself, he was assaulted by the police.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman is now in a position to answer some questions which the Solicitor General for Ireland was on Wednesday, and he himself on Friday, were unable to answer. Was not a joint letter written to the police authorities by Father Clarke and Father Farrelly announcing their readiness to be arrested; why was the warrant for their arrest held over for five weeks, when the police could have arrested Father Farrelly every day; why was the first step they took the breaking in of Father Farrelly's house in the dead of night; and what was the legal authority under which the police acted?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it would be more convenient that the right hon. Gentleman should put these questions down upon the paper.

Mr. SEXTON: I did.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Although I have seen a report from the police I am unable to answer the questions except from recollection. With regard to the first question I do not know whether a joint letter was sent by the two reverend gentlemen referred to, but the circumstances which transpired showed that they were by no means anxious to be arrested. In regard to the breaking into Father Farrelly's house at the dead of night my belief is that it occurred early in the morning. The police summoned Father Farrelly to come out, and finding that their summons was not responded to, and that the house was barricaded, they broke into it, and did not find that Father Farrelly was there. As to legal authority, I believe that all the police did was entirely within their legal right.

Mr. SEXTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman affirm the very unusual suggestion made by the hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston)?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no information on the subject.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N): An intimate acquaintance with Father Farrelly enables me to say that the insinuation conveyed in the question of the hon. Member for South Belfast will be regarded by everybody who knows Father Farrelly as a gross and cowardly calumny.

Mr. W. CORBET: Has the right hon. Gentleman seen in a local Tory paper a statement that when the train arrived at Arklow, Father Farrelly went on to the platform and asked the sergeant of police if he had a warrant for his arrest; that the sergeant replied in the negative, and Father Farrelly then went away stating that he would be prepared to give himself up at 10 o'clock on the following morning? A large crowd had assembled who hooted the police, but Father Farrelly advised them to go home.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not seen the report to which the hon. Member refers, but if it is correct it is in no way inconsistent with the statement I just made, that, notwithstanding the joint letter, Father Farrelly displayed no extreme readiness to be arrested.

Mr. SEXTON: Is it the fact that eventually the rev. gentleman went to gaol of his own accord, accompanied by two officers in plain clothes?

Mr. JOHNSTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman able to say why Father Farrelly rung the bell?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I must respectfully point out to hon. Members that most of the questions put to me have a very indirect reference to the question on the paper. I must ask that notice should be given of them.

Subsequently,

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): The hon. Member for South Belfast (Mr. Johnston) has stated that the Rev. Father Farrelly was drunk on a certain occasion, and I desire to ask him a question on the subject.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I would point out to the hon. Member that that would be a most irregular proceeding. The expression referred to was used by the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Belfast in a supplementary question, and may be taken as an illustration of the abuse of the practice of putting these supplementary questions. I think it is right that the matter should be allowed to rest there. It would be out of order for the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin County to ask any further question on the subject.

Mr. CLANCY: It was because I knew I had been somewhat out of order that I rose to put this question; and I now throw myself on the indulgence of the House, in order that I may be enabled to put the question. A gross imputation has been cast on the Rev. Father Farelly by the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Belfast.

*Mr. SPEAKER: There was no doubt an imputation thrown out, but it was irrelevant and arose in a supplementary question, which I should never have allowed to have been put on the Paper had it been submitted to me. It was, however, put before I could interfere, and it was met with a denial by an hon. Gentleman on the opposite side of the House, and there the matter ought to be allowed to rest.

Mr. CLANCY: I appeal to the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Belfast either to give his authority for the statement he has made, or to withdraw it.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant whether there was anything in the detailed Report of the arrest of the Rev. Father Farrelly that could justify the imputation thrown out by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Belfast (Mr. Johnston)?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have given the whole substance of the Report, and told the House that the rev. gentleman seemed to have been excited, but there was nothing at all that, so far as I know, would in any way bear out the imputation that has been made.

SLIGO LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Mr. CONWAY (Leitrim, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he had any objection to publishing and distributing among Members copies of the plan for the re-organisation of the Board of Lunatic Asylums, which was discussed in a Circular issued 9th May, 1888; whether the Board of the Sligo Lunatic Asylum would in future consist of 19 guardians, of whom five, who are to be grand jurors, will be appointed by his Excellency; and whether there was any intention of modifying this arrangement in the direction of electing the Board on popular lines?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no objection, if the hon. Member will move for it. Sligo and Leitrim Asylum will have a Board of 19; nine nominated by the Lord Lieutenant direct, 10 by the Lord Lieutenant from names submitted to him by the Grand Juries. The new plan is itself an important modification in the direction of making the Board representative.

POSTAL DELIVERIES.

Mr. CONWAY asked the Postmaster General whether representations had reached him of the insufficiency of the number of deliveries of letters in the populous district of Aughacashel, five miles from the Drumshanbo Post Office, County Leitrim, which was only three per week; whether the postmaster of the office at Drumshanbo had the power of regulating the deliveries; whether the cost for the daily delivery of letters would amount to more than 7s. per week; and whether arrangements could be made for the daily delivery of letters in the district?

*Mr. RAIKES: It is true that the official delivery of letters at Aughacashel is at present restricted, as the hon. Member states, to three days a week, but even this accommodation entails an expenditure which more than absorbs the revenue derived from the letters, and I regret that I should not be justified in sanctioning a post six days a week, although the cost would probably not exceed the sum mentioned by the hon. Member, unless the deficiency is guaranteed by the residents.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS.

Mr. CONWAY asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he could state why the present Roman Catholic Chaplain of Leeds Gaol received only £50 a year, whereas his predecessor received a salary of £125 per annum; whether the Protestant Chaplain received £350 per annum and the use of a house; whether the present Roman Catholic Chaplain attended to the religious necessities of at least an average of 120 prisoners; and if he would consider the propriety of remedying to some extent this difference of position between the chaplains?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Fifty pounds a year is the salary applicable to the present Roman Catholic Chaplain at Leeds Prison, under rules approved by the Treasury, and based on the recommendation of a Select Committee of this House, of the year 1870, to which I beg to refer the hon. Member. The present priest's predecessor was appointed in 1871, by the late Local Authority, at the salary stated, which was continued to him by virtue of Section 35 of the Prisons Act, 1877. The lately deceased Protestant Chaplain was remunerated as stated. His successor will commence at £300 per annum, having over 400 prisoners to attend to. The daily average of Roman Catholic prisoners for the last three years has been 98. When the average daily number exceeds 100, the Chaplain will, under the Treasury rule, receive £100 a year. A Protestant Chaplain with the like number of prisoners would have a salary of £150.

FATHER M'FADDEN.

Mr. MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on what ground a telegram, directed to the honourable Member for South Donegal to the House of Commons last Monday, by Father M'Fadden, from Derry Gaol, was forwarded by the Governor of Derry Gaol, not to the honourable Member, but to Dublin Castle, where it has been detained; whether he is aware that in the telegram Father M'Fadden asserts that he and the Gweedore prisoners had been remanded eight times and were remanded for the ninth time the following day, and not three times, as has been stated; and on whose authority was a telegram, addressed by an unconvicted prisoner to a member of this House, intercepted without the knowledge or sanction of the Chief Secretary?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that it is not the practice in Ireland or in England to forward vituperative telegrams or letters. In the telegram there were statements made to the effect that whereas the Chief Secretary had said he believed there were three or four remands, there had, as a matter of fact, been nine on the date of the telegram. The Prisons Board acted on the authority vested in them by Parliament.

Mr. MAC NEILL: I will ask the permission of the House to read a telegram which has been sent to me ["Order"]. Then I will ask the Chief Secretary if this is a correct copy of the telegram:—

> "To Mr. MacNeill, M.P., House of Commons. It is simply shocking to hear Mr. Balfour reply on Friday night to Mr. MacNeill and Mr. Wodehouse, that myself and others, charged with complicity in the death of Inspector Martin, had only been three or four times remanded. Now, as a matter of fact, last Saturday (Saturday week) I was lodged in Derry Gaol for the ninth time since my arrest on the 29th of January, three from Gweedore, one from Lifford and five from Letterkenny."

Then follow some words which I will not read. The telegram concludes:—

> "The above are the real facts, and I challenge Balfour to contradict them. Signed, James M'Fadden, parish priest."

Again, I ask the right hon. Gentleman what authority the Irish Executive have to suppress telegrams to gentlemen acting in a public capacity?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As far as I am aware, the Prisons Board of Ireland have the same rights as the Prisons Board of England, and they are exercised in the same way. In regard to the telegram which has been quoted by the hon. Member, it is not my duty to say whether it should have been forwarded or not. The telegram is not before me, and I cannot say, judging from the internal evidence, whether it is a correct copy or not.

Mr. SEXTON: I should like to inquire from the right hon. Gentleman whether, when he makes a statement in this House affecting a prisoner, and that prisoner telegraphs to a Member of this House contradicting the statement of the Minister, the Department over which he presides is authorized to prevent the contradiction from being forwarded?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir; but a proper telegram contradicting a statement made by me would not have been stopped by the Prisons Board.

Mr. MAC NEILL: In what respect was this telegram improper?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not, so far as I am concerned, regard the words which the hon. Member omitted as of importance; but the Prisons Board consider them improper.

Mr. MAC NEILL: I purposely omitted those words, but if the right hon. Gentleman desires it I will read them to the House. Father M'Fadden added: "The bold mendacity of Balfour is becoming unbearable."

ARREARS OF RENT.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in cases in which landlords obtain Chairman's decrees for only one half-year's rent, a second half-year's rent not being yet due, he will grant the aid of the forces of the Crown; whether he is aware that Mr. George A. Moore, of Moorehall, County Mayo, is now taking proceedings against tenants, one half-year's rent only being due; whether he is aware that Peter Keaveney, of Ballintubber, has, at the suit of Mr. George A. Moore, been served with a Civil Bill, dated 16th March, 1889, "for the sum of £6 5s. due for half-a-year's rent of part of the lands of Ballintubber, held by defendant of plaintiff as yearly tenant at the yearly rent of £12 10s., up to and ending the 1st day of May, 1888"; and if he will endeavour to discourage such conduct on the part of landlords?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware of any case in which Mr. Moore or any other landlord is taking proceedings against tenants in cases in which only one half-year's rent is due. In the case of Peter Keaveney, mentioned, one year's rent was actually due, though the landlord only required the payment of one half-year in the proceedings taken by him. I do not suppose this is the kind of conduct on the part of landlords which the hon. Gentleman is anxious that I should discourage.

THE EMPLOYERS' AND WORKMEN'S ACT, 1875.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to an adjudication at Wakefield on March 8th, by the West Riding Magistrates, acting under "The Employers' and Workmen's Act, 1875," against 65 women, girls, and lads charged with leaving their work unfinished, when the justices awarded damages, and also ordered the defendants to complete the work; whether it was competent for the justices under "The Employers' and Workmen's Act, 1875," section 3, sub-section 3, to both award damages and order the defendants to complete the work; and whether the powers of the justices are limited, so that the order for performance of the contract must be in place either of the whole of the damages, which would otherwise have been awarded, or some part of such damages?

Mr. H. MATTHEWS: I have asked the justices to report to me on this matter, but have not as yet received their reply. The remainder of the question is one of law, on which I have no authority to give an opinion; but I may suggest for the hon. Member's consideration whether, under the Statute the justices have not power to order the completion of the work, and also to award damages, provided that the damages so awarded are in respect of some injury beyond and beside the non-completion of the work.

IRELAND.—EVICTIONS IN CORK.

Mr. SEXTON (West Belfast): I beg to ask, on behalf of my hon. Friend (Mr. Gilhooly), whether the attention of the Chief Secretary for Ireland has been drawn to the report of the eviction of Michael Donovan, at Ballydurane, near Clonakilty, County Cork, from which it appears that Mathew Donovan, aged 86 years, the father of the tenant, was dragged from his bed of illness, and fainted when taken from the house; whether the eviction was abandoned some months ago owing to the illness of Mathew Donovan; whether Dr. Hayes, on behalf of the landlord, certified on Wednesday last that Mr. Donovan was fit to be removed; whether previous to the eviction, Father Hill, on the part of Mr. Donovan, made an offer of settlement to the landlord, Mr. Beecher, which the Sheriff, who was in attendance at the eviction, stated to be fair; and, if the above statements be true, whether the forces of the Crown will be used in future to assist at such evictions?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that Mathew Donovan, the father of the tenant, Michael Donovan, is known as one of the healthiest and strongest men of his age in the country about where he lives. It is true that a few days ago, and also in October last, the eviction of the son was abandoned on account of the alleged illness of the father. But it is also true that on the day previous to each attempted eviction the old man was going about the farm as usual, and I am informed that he has not been known to be confined to his bed except on these days of attempted eviction. On the recent occasion the doctor examined him in bed, and I understand that he is prepared to prove, if necessary, that the old man was in a perfectly healthy condition, and fit to be removed, but that he was overcome by excitement caused by the turbulent behaviour of his relatives. The doctor then advised that he should not be moved, and the eviction was accordingly abandoned. I have no details as to the nature of the settlement offered, but have been promised information.

Mr. SEXTON: Concerning the imputation the right hon. Gentleman has made, I ask him whether this old man of 86 years was taken out of his bed; whether he fainted while the two men were forcibly dressing him; and whether two doctors, brought there to certify to his condition, applied a galvanic battery to restore him to animation?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I must have notice of that question. I am not aware there were two doctors. I am told he was not confined to his bed until the day of the eviction, and possibly that was caused by fear, and possibly the same cause led to his fainting.

POOR LAW ELECTION AT CARRICK-ON-SUIR.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Returning Officer appointed by the Local Government Board for conducting the Poor Law election in the Carrick-on-Suir Union, failed in his duty in these particulars: by failing to have voting papers delivered to all ratepayers who were entitled to vote; by not being in attendance in his office on the days of the 20th and 21st March on the hours prescribed by the Statute, namely, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and by setting aside the voting papers of numerous Nationalists on frivolous pretences; whether complaints have reached him that several Nationalist voters to whom no papers had been issued were in attendance at the office of the Returning Officer on the days of the 20th and 21st March, within the prescribed hours, to register their votes, but were deprived of the opportunity of voting owing to his absence, the entries in the porter's book showing that he left on the 20th at 4.15 p.m., and on the 21st at 4.20 p.m.; and, whether, under these circumstances, he will have full inquiries made to ascertain if the election was invalid, and, if so, have a new election ordered?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Local Government Board inform me that the Returning Officer states that he left his office at the time mentioned in consequence of indisposition, but that he is not aware of any ratepayer having called in his absence, and the workhouse porter informed him that none had done so. If, however, the Local Government Board are supplied with the names of any voters who have not been supplied with voting papers they will cause further inquiry to be made.

SCOTLAND—THE SIX-INCH SURVEY.

Mr. M. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I wish to ask the First Commissioner of Works what steps are being taken to complete the survey of the six counties in Scotland on the six-inch scale; if he can account for the long delay which has taken place; and when it is expected the whole survey of Scotland will be completed?

***Mr. PLUNKET** (Dublin University): It is proposed to commence the re-survey of the six Scotch counties as soon as that of Lancashire and Yorkshire has been completed, and to employ at least three of the Survey Divisions continuously upon it until it is finished. The re-survey of the six Scotch counties will, we hope, be commenced in less than three years' time, but no date can be given for its completion until some experience has been gained of the changes that have taken place since the six-inch survey was made. The delay in the re-survey of the six Scotch counties has been due to the fact that the whole strength of the Survey staff has been employed on the survey of English counties, which had no maps on a larger scale than one inch to a mile. The recent delay has been caused by the reduction of the Survey Vote, which has led to the abolition of two Survey Divisions.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

Mr. PETER M'DONALD (North Sligo): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is true that Mr. M'Hugh, ex-Mayor of Sligo, now undergoing a sentence of six months' imprisonment, with hard labour, in Derry Gaol, for an offence under the Press Clauses of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, was for five weeks deprived of his privilege, according to prison rules, of writing any letter, for no cause other than that he was confined to hospital; whether, when eventually allowed to write a letter to his wife, the Governor refused to forward it and confiscated it on his own authority; and whether the rules permit an appeal to the Prisons Board by a prisoner against the decision of the Governor; and, if so, why was this right denied to Mr. M'Hugh?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that it is not the case that the prisoner in question was deprived of the privilege of writing a letter because of his being confined in hospital. He neither appears to have applied for permission to write a letter to his wife, nor, as a matter of fact, to have written such a letter. All prisoners are entitled to write to the Board regarding any complaint of their treatment. The Governor reports that this prisoner made no application to be permitted to thus address the Board, nor, as a matter of fact, has he done so.

Mr. SEXTON: As I have in my possession an extract from a letter that was impounded by the Governor of the Gaol, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to make further inquiry as to whether the Governor of a Gaol, without the sanction of the Prisons Board, has personally the right to act in this way?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will give me the extract from the letter, and I will consider it.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT—JUSTICES FOR LONDON.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been called to a circular issued by the Clerk of the Peace for the county of London, addressed to justices of Middlesex, who, under the Local Government Act, become justices for London, calling upon them to pay a fee of £1 1s. on appointment; and whether such a demand could legally be insisted on, looking to the fact that these gentlemen have already paid a fee on appointment as justices for Middlesex?

***The ATTORNEY GENERAL** (Sir Richard Webster, Isle of Wight): Since this question has appeared upon the Paper, I have been looking into the matter. It appears that some doubt was raised as to whether justices ought or ought not to qualify to act for the county of London, and a circular was issued by the Clerk of the Peace, for the purpose of calling their attention to the legal question. I doubt whether the fee proposed to be charged by the Clerk of the Peace can legally be insisted on, and upon my calling the attention of the Clerk of the Peace to the matter, he has intimated to me that there being a doubt upon the matter he will prefer to return to the justices for Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent, any fees which have been paid to him.

THE SCOTCH EDUCATION CODE.

Mr. MACINTOSH (Inverness shire): I beg, on behalf of my hon. Friend (Dr. Cameron) to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether resolutions or memorials praying for the re-insertion in the Scottish Education Code for 1889, of the provisions of the Code of 1887, have been adopted by the School Boards of Glasgow, Govan, Dundee, Cupar, New Monkland, Airdrie, Helensburgh, Stranraer, Campbeltown, and other places in Scotland; and whether, having regard to that expression of opinion, it is still intended to insert in the Scottish Code for 1889 the altered conditions as to grants for cookery embodied in the Scottish Code for 1888, but suspended in compliance with an undertaking given by him on the 19th of April last?

***The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY** (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): The Lord President and the Secretary for Scotland have fully considered all the representations that have been made on this subject. The Scotch Code was laid on the Table some days ago, and has now been distributed; it does not contain the altered conditions as to grants for cookery, which were inserted in the Code of 1888, and to which the hon. Member refers.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he was aware that the Lord President of the Council received a deputation a fortnight ago from representatives of the Edinburgh School Board and the chief cookery schools of Scotland and England, urging, on the ground both of efficiency and economy, the insertion of the original provision of last year's Code, as regards cookery grants, in opposition to the view suggested by the question of the hon. Member for the College Division?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The views submitted to the Lord President and the Secretary for Scotland by the deputation referred to were fully considered by the Scotch Education Department in connection with other representations on the subject; but, after full deliberation, it was not thought expedient at present to make the change in the cookery grant which was suggested.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. JOHN CORBETT (Droitwich): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what are the intentions of Government with reference to the Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill of last Session?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Bill to which the hon. Member refers will probably reach this House this week, and the Government will do what they can to enable the Bill to pass in the course of the present Session.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—THE EASTER ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can, for the convenience of Members, say when the House will adjourn for Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope to be in a position to give the House information as to the views of the Government on this subject on Thursday.

THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can state the amount voted for extra work in the Savings Bank Department of the General Post Office in the Estimates for 1886-7, 1887-8, and 1888-9 respectively, together with the amounts actually paid on this head for 1886-7 and 1887-8, and the amounts paid or due for 1888-9; and, as the examination and comparison of depositors' books with the ledgers of the Department is one of the most effective checks on both the local postmasters and the work of the ledger clerks, whether he will state the total number of deposit books received for examination from the 1st of January 1888 to the 1st of January 1889, and the number examined in the regular course during official hours and on extra work respectively; and whether he will state the number of established male clerks employed on extra work from the 1st of January 1889 to the 23rd of March 1889, and the number of hours extra work performed by them?

*Mr. RAIKES: The total amount voted for all extra work in the Savings Bank for the three respective years was:— 1886-7, £10,500; 1887-8, £10,300; 1888-9, £10,200. The amounts expended were:— 1886-7, £11,522; 1887-8, £13,306; probable amount for 1889-90, £16,000. The total number of deposit books received for examination from the 1st of January, 1888, to the 1st of January, 1889, was 1,636,319. Of these, 1,078,303 were examined during official hours. The number examined on extra duty was 558,016. Between the 1st of January, 1889, and the 23rd of March last, 391 established male clerks were employed on extra work. This extra work is mainly piece work, and is allotted to those who volunteer. I cannot give the number of hours of extra work performed by each one of them. I may add that I am taking steps to reduce the amount of extra duty.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it was from the Home Office, or from the Prisons Board, or the Governor of Millbank Prison, Mr. Soames obtained the privilege of a private interview with James Mullett for his (Mr. Soames's) representative, Mr. Thompson; if Mr. Thompson was not a solicitor was the private interview accorded to him according to ordinary rule; if not according to ordinary rule, why was the private interview granted; and could other solicitors expect similar privileges for their representatives?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have several times already stated that Mr. Soames obtained the privilege of the interview in question from the Prison Commissioners. The private interview was allowed according to usual practice, and the representatives of other solicitors may expect similar privileges under similar circumstances.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has communicated with Mr. R. Anderson, Sub-Commissioner of Police, in regard to his having written a letter to the *Times* upon matters which came before him owing to his connection with the Detective Department of the Home Office; and, if so, what was the nature of the communication; whether he has observed that Mr. Anderson stated in his letter to the *Times* that Mr. Macdonald appealed to him to help him in finding a witness to prove what he called the American part of the case of the *Times* against the Irish Members and others, and that it appears from the tenour of the letter that the relations of Mr. Anderson with the Home Office and with the Irish Office were kept secret; and whether he can state if those relations were known to Mr. Macdonald through his being informed of them by anyone connected with the Home Office or with the Irish Office?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Considering the circumstances of extreme provocation under which Mr. Anderson's letter was written, I have not thought it necessary to make any official communication to him on the subject. I am not aware by what channel or to what extent the relations of Mr. Anderson with the Home Office or the Irish Office became known to Mr. Macdonald.

INLAND REVENUE—WEDDING RINGS

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask whether the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been called to the fact that at the recent Birmingham Assizes the Guardians of Wrought Plate of Birmingham successfully sued a jeweller for fines amounting to £720 (reduced to £50 at the suggestion of the learned Judge who tried the case) for selling plain 9-carat gold rings, unhallmarked, such rings being held to be wedding rings, and therefore liable to the duty of 17s. per ounce, and that the Guardians are prosecuting in another case in which the fines are estimated at £2,000; whether Her Majesty's Government require that every plain gold ring should be treated as a wedding ring, whether sold as a wedding ring or otherwise; whether, seeing that no drawback of duty is allowed upon the export of wedding rings, he can issue such instructions to the various assay offices as will permit manufacturers to execute foreign orders for plain gold rings, and to export them without the obligation of assay or payment of duty; and whether, seeing the difficulty in regard to our home trade of determining what is and what is not a wedding ring, he will consider the expediency of abolishing the duty upon all plain gold rings?

*Mr. JACKSON: The attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been called to the case to which the hon. Member refers, and the facts are as stated. In the absence of any legal definition of a wedding ring all plain gold rings are *primâ facie* liable to duty, though, as a matter of fact, the practice of the Board of Inland Revenue has been not to take proceedings in cases when the rings, if solid, exceed 7 dwts. in weight, or, if hollow, exceed 5-16 in. in inside breadth. In the case to which the hon. Member refers the jury held that the rings were wedding rings and were sold as such, and it seems to me that the question "What is a wedding ring?" is one peculiarly fitted for a jury to decide. With regard to the third paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I may say that the provision disallowing drawback upon the export of wedding rings was made so far back as 1820, probably on account of the difficulty the Customs found in examining such small articles. As nearly the whole of the gold plate duty is derived from wedding rings, both this and the concluding question of the hon. Member are intimately connected with the general question of the repeal of the duty, which has for some time been under the consideration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE HURRICANE AT SAMOA.

Sir C. PALMER (Jarrow): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can give any information as to the escape of Her Majesty's ship *Calliope*, in the hurricane off Samoa, which proved so disastrous to the squadrons of other Powers; what class of ship she was; and whether she owed her safety to her greater steaming power, or to the superior seamanship of the crew? Any information the First Lord can give would be specially interesting, in view of the debate upon which the House is about to enter.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I have had no information since Saturday morning of the sad catastrophe that has occurred to the German and American Squadrons at Samoa. Early on Saturday morning I received a telegram from the Naval Commander-in-Chief in New Zealand waters, stating that a hurricane, which suddenly broke over Samoa, had totally destroyed the German and American Squadrons, but that the *Calliope* had escaped and got out to sea; and he adds that she was uninjured as regards her engines and her hull, from which I infer that she suffered some minor injuries. The *Calliope* is a vessel of the "C" class, and we have no particulars at all as to how she effected her escape. Perhaps I may be permitted, as representing the English Board of Admiralty, to express here publicly our deep regret and sympathy at the terrible calamity which has befallen the Squadrons of two friendly Powers.

Mr. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): Can the First Lord of the Treasury give the House the names of the officers of the *Calliope?*

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: They are in the Navy List, and can be seen by any hon. Gentleman who goes into the Library.

THE SUGAR BOUNTY CONVENTION.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman state when the Bill dealing with the Sugar Convention will be laid before the House?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: I hope that the Bill dealing with this subject will be introduced next week.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I have to ask the hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Colonies whether he will lay on the Table the full correspondence, a portion of which has already appeared in the newspapers, between him and a firm of wholesale confectioners on the subject of the Sugar Convention?

***Baron H. de WORMS**: Some of the letters are private, and therefore the right hon. Gentleman can hardly expect them to be laid on the Table.

Mr. GLADSTONE (Mid Lothian): The question is whether the hon. Gentleman will lay on the Table the letters asked for, which may be material in regard to the question to which they relate. They are public documents belonging to a public office.

***Baron H. de WORMS**: My private answer to a private letter from the firm referred to cannot be called official. The other letters have been published by the firm.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I will move for the production of the documents as a Return, and I trust the First Lord of the Treasury will see the importance of giving them.

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I wish to ask what will be the business taken on Thursday?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: We hope on Thursday, first of all, to take the Report of the Naval Resolutions, which we trust we will be able to conclude in Committee to-day. After that we propose to take Supply.

Mr. CHILDERS: What will be the course if the Resolutions are not finished to-day, as to which there is considerable doubt?

***Mr. W. H. SMITH**: I cannot entertain any doubt that the Committee will be able to finish the Resolutions to-night. They were introduced to the House on the 7th of March, they were considered further on the 21st of March, and now, on the 1st of April, a whole evening may be spent upon them; and as they are only the foundation for a Bill on which discussion will probably arise, I think, if I may venture to say so, it would be somewhat unreasonable that the discussion on the Committee stage should be protracted beyond this evening.

Sir W. LAWSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman move the Closure to-night, and so stop the debate?

No answer was given.

IRELAND—ACTIONS OF EMERGENCY MEN.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he has any information as to the reported burning of the houses of evicted tenants at Clongorey by emergency men, accompanied by a large force of police; and whether, as the execution of the law had been completed, the Government authorized the use of the forces of the Crown to effect this destruction of property?

MR. BALFOUR: The police were there simply to protect the persons in charge of the houses from which the tenants had been evicted. The hon. Member's version of the story is not quite accurate.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Captain Henry Ferryman Bowles, County of Middlesex (Enfield Division).

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS—DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: May I ask the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty why it is that 240 men were discharged from the Haulbowline Dockyard on Saturday?

LORD G. HAMILTON: I only received notice of the hon. Gentleman's question a few minutes ago, and therefore have not had time to obtain any information in regard to the matter to which it refers; but I imagine that, if there has been any discharge of workmen at Haulbowline, it is because the works they have been engaged upon have been completed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

NAVAL DEFENCE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Question again proposed,

"That it is expedient to authorize (a) the expenditure of a sum not exceeding £21,500,000, for the purpose of building, arming, equipping, and completing for sea vessels for Her Majesty's Navy; of this expenditure a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in the seven years ending on the 31st day of March 1896; and a sum not exceeding £11,500,000, to be issued out of moneys provided by Parliament for Naval Services during the five financial years ending on the 31st day of March 1894."—(*Lord George Hamilton.*)

Amendment again proposed,

To leave out all the words after the first word "That," in order to add the words "having regard to the statements made during the last Session of Parliament by the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of State for War, as to the efficiency of the armaments of the Country for the purpose of Defence, and seeing that the Nation was assured, in the recent Speech from the Throne, that Her Majesty's relations with Foreign Powers, which were of the most peaceful character last year, remain in the same satisfactory condition, this Committee deems it expedient to authorise the expenditure asked for by the Government,"—(*Mr. Cremer,*)

—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

MR. GLADSTONE: I rise to suggest, subject to the pleasure and rule of the House, that we shall be adopting a more regular course if we can arrange a change in the form of the question as it has been put. The commencement of the original Motion is on the subject of expenditure, and the Amendment of my hon. Friend also refers exclusively to expenditure; but the original Motion passes off from the subject of expenditure to what is a totally distinct question—namely, the manner in which the expenditure is to be provided. I own I am aware that there is an Amendment on the Paper, and that it will follow naturally that all the words of the original Motion should be left out in order that the Amendment of my hon. Friend should be inserted; but I think it would be more advantageous and more regular if the Amendment to leave out certain words could be limited to the first three lines of the original Motion, ending at the word "Navy," so that the Government proposal for the expenditure would then be met with a distinct refusal of that expenditure, after which would come the specific subject of the second part of the Resolution with regard to the mode of providing the expenditure. Everyone will see that the two questions are entirely distinct, and I desire, if it be the pleasure of the House to permit it to be done, to disentangle those two subjects, and in order to do so I suggest that the form of the question should be altered, and that the Amendment should only be to leave out the words down to the word "Navy." This can only be done by the general permission of the House, which might approve of the first part of the Resolution and disapprove of the second, or, on the other hand, might disapprove of the first part. I am bound to say I think it would rather tend to expedite business. Of course the Motion could be made in Committee or on Report, when a separate discussion might occur with a fresh start. But I conceive that upon all these questions the original Committee stage is, according to Parliamentary usage, the proper, most fitting, and best time for the discussion of the merits of the subject. I, therefore, venture to make this suggestion.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I will not enter into discussion with the right hon. Gentleman as to the most usual course to pursue with regard to such Resolutions, but my impression was rather different from that of the right hon. Gentleman. It was that Resolutions were accepted by the House, and that the serious discussions of an important character were taken on the Bill founded on the Resolutions. I have some reason to complain that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh only appeared on the Paper on Saturday morning, although the Government Resolution has been on the Paper since the 2nd March. I shall offer no opposition to any course which is calculated to facilitate the progress of business and which will enable the Committee to come, this evening, to a decision on the Resolutions as a whole. But I think it would be unreasonable that a discussion of this character should be protracted, especially after we recognize the fact that the Amendment now sought to be considered is one which has only been produced three weeks after the original Resolution appeared on the paper.

Mr. GLADSTONE: If the right hon. Gentleman asks me for a pledge that the discussion will conclude this evening, I must ask him how long the discussion which will precede the consideration of the Amendment of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh, will occupy? I am afraid that the First Lord of the Treasury could not tell me that, and, therefore, I would advise my right hon. Friend to give notice of his Amendment for the report stage on Thursday.

*Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I will take that course. But I would remind the First Lord of the Treasury that there has only been one debate on the general subject of the Resolutions, and that did not last a whole day. I thought it would be inconvenient to put down an Amendment to the second part of the Resolution until after the amendments to the general question were on the Paper, and about to be considered.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I must point out that an interval of a fortnight elapsed between the statement of my noble Friend the Frst Lord of the Admiralty and the first discussion, and during the whole of that fortnight it was open to the right hon. Gentleman to put his Amendment on the Paper.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): Many of us on this side of the House think the Amendment first to be discussed is of far more importance than that of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh. Surely, when a question of policy of a most dangerous character is submitted to Parliament, we ought not to be asked to pass the Resolution as a matter of form. Those of us who have any experience in this House know that when it is declared expedient that a certain sum of money should be expended by Parliament for a specific purpose, it is always open to debate. I do not think the House of Commons has ever been called on in recent times to decide on a more serious financial question than this one. I myself oppose both the substance and the form of the Government Resolution, and I believe that in so doing I am in accord with many hon. Members sitting on these Benches. Therefore it will seem strange to us and to the country if the closure should be attempted at a time when we are asked to take into consideration an important question of policy.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! It is extremely inconvient that reference should be made to the closure as if it rested entirely with the leader of the House. As it appears not to be the wish of the House that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Haggerston should be withdrawn, it is not convenient that this preliminary discussion should be prolonged.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD (Marylebone, E.): I do not see that anything which has transpired in this conversation should prevent me going on with the debate which was not concluded when the matter was last before the House. Now, I considered the remarks made to the House the other night by the hon. Member for Haggerston to be most important for two reasons—first, because as I am well aware a large number of people in the country—many of them working men—hold the hon. Member's views; and, secondly, because the hon. Member is a working man's Representative, and I should like, if possible, to upset some of his arguments in a perfectly argumentative way. I was not at all astonished that the hon. Member appeared to be puzzled and mystified as to why so large an amount of money was necessary; but I will show him how it came about. He said very rightly that we were always getting into scares like this, and the Government of the day promptly came forward and wanted to lay out a large sum of money, as necessary for the safety of the country. The hon. Member has referred to some of us as experts, and has complained of our action, but as a fact, what I desire to do is to awaken the country to a statement of fact. I do not want to create a scare; I only want the truth to be made known. The hon. Member said he had a duty to perform as a Member of this House. So, Sir, have I. Now, Sir, before I sit down I think I shall be able to show him that he took a very bad date for the purposes of his argument when he referred to the Naval Estimate of 20 years ago, for in that year the country had begun for a variety of reasons to reduce its Naval Estimate, which ought to be taken, from a business point of view, as the rate of insurance for the country. Twenty years ago the nation's imports and exports amounted to £334,000,000, and the Naval Estimate was only £10,000,000. Now, the imports and exports have risen to £680,000,000 and our Naval Estimate is £1,000,000 less. Twenty years ago, consequently, the rate of insurance we were paying in the shape of our Naval Estimate was 3·41; now we are only paying 1·85. If the hon. Member claimed that we should have no Naval Estimate at all, then there might be some merit in his argument, but he is not justified in saying that we are paying too much now as compared with the basis of payment 20 years ago. We must have a navy to protect our commerce. The hon. Member would not say to his constituents that the food supply, the commerce, and the shores of Great Britain shall not be defended at all; and, if defence is to be undertaken at all, it should be done in a business-like way, and not as the two Front Benches have been doing. Why, they must confess that they have adopted principles dictated mainly by Party reasons and not by the completeness of the defence of the country. If not, why did the First Lord of the Admiralty state on a previous occasion that the country was paying too much for the Navy?

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: No.

Lord C. BERESFORD: The noble Lord expressed the hope that he might reduce the Estimates, and stated that the then shipbuilding vote, if carried out, would run the fleet up to a standard which would be ample for the defence of the country. I do not blame the right hon. Gentleman for tacking ship. I told him he would have to do it. My point is that he should not have put the rocks in his own way; he should have put the necessity for the increase before the country. But let me continue my answer to the hon. Member for Haggerston. In the last 20 years the tonnage of the Mercantile Marine has risen from 5,700,000 to 9,135,000 tons; and if the Estimate of 20 years ago was sufficient for the commerce of that day it is not sufficient now; and yet the Estimate of to-day is less by £1,000,000. As a matter of fact, two prominent European Powers have increased their Naval Estimates in the last 20 years by four and a-quarter millions a year. The population of this country has increased 8,000,000 or 9,000,000, and the imports have doubled during the last 20 years, and can it be said that if a navy of a certain strength was required then, a stronger navy is not now necessary?

*Mr. CREMER: I made no such admission as that which the noble Lord asserts. I did not say that the Navy 20 years ago was either adequate or necessary. I said nothing upon the point, and the noble Lord is quite in error in putting into my mouth words I did not use.

LORD C. BERESFORD: Then I do not see where the hon. Member's argument is. I understood him to put forward as an argument, that there was an increase in the Naval Estimates now over those of 20 years ago. I am sorry if I misunderstood him.

*Mr. CREMER: That is true. I instituted a comparison between the ordinary Naval Estimates now, and the ordinary naval expenditure 20 years ago, pointing out the increase which has taken place during this period.

LORD C. BERESFORD: I fail to see the hon. Member's object in introducing it.

*MR. CREMER: I pointed out the increase which had taken place as evidence of the demands which are continually being made for increased expenditure upon the Navy.

LORD C. BERESFORD: Then I want to know whether the hon. Member is prepared to say that our commerce, our shores, our trade, and our food supply is not to be defended?

*MR. CREMER: Yes; when danger is proved to exist; but not before. I ask where the danger is?

LORD C. BERESFORD: The danger is in being unprepared. The hon. Gentleman will be the first to agree with me that this country ought to be protected, not in the way it has been done, without any definite plans, without the experts being called together and deciding what shall be protected and how, but after the experts have made out their plans and given their reasons to the House of Commons. I find fault with the Government because they are going to do the right thing in the wrong way. I told the Government the other day that they were going to do the right thing, though they were going to do it in the wrong way. If the hon. Member for Haggerston, who has brought forward his views in a very able manner, had directed his remarks to the right-about-face of the Government I should not have got up to answer him. But, as I understood him, though, perhaps, again I am wrong, the hon. Member directed his shafts against the opinions of what he described as "the cormorants," men like myself who are endeavouring, to the best of their ability, to let the country know what is wanted, and to give their reasons. I was very much astonished to hear the First Lord of the Treasury hint that a debate so important as this should be in any way curtailed. Putting aside Party altogether, the defence of the Empire is the most important question that could be brought before the House, and it is desirable that every light should be thrown upon it. The argument brought forward by the hon. Member for Haggerston is one held by a great number of people, and it is desirable that it should be debated so that people should see whether it is right or wrong. I therefore hope it will not be curtailed. Now with reference to the remarks of the hon. Member for Cardiff, if they had been directed to vessels of the *Admiral* class I should have agreed with him entirely. The First Lord of the Admiralty was, I think, wrong in describing them as of the *Admiral* class. He said that the new ships were more assimilated to the *Admiral* class than to the *Trafalgar*. What I imagine him to mean is that they were more assimilated in the matter of auxiliary armament.

LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: What I said was that the position of the armour resembled that of the *Admiral* class, but that the position of the armament was more of the *Trafalgar* class.

LORD C. BERESFORD: I entirely agree that the ship's platform whose safety you have to insure is not at all like that of the *Admiral* class. We must do our best to make the House understand this technical question. We will begin by the fact that a first-class ship, cruiser, or any fighting machine must be a compromise. First of all, we start with the theory of an armoured battleship that cannot be sunk or put out of action unless its armour is pierced. Secondly, we must put down the weight of the armour and what we are going to put on the ship, and then let experts discuss and decide where is the best point to put the armour on. These are points which must be talked over in Committee at the Admiralty. I will tell my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff that the reason why I like the new ships is because they are not naval architects' ships. My idea of what our naval administration ought to be and of the mode in which our naval architecture should be conducted is that it should be done in a business-like way, as in Germany. In Germany the experts discuss for days what ships are necessary, and make out a plan and sign a memorandum of their views. First they find out how many ships they want, and then they lay down the principles on which the ships shall be built. They have opinions as to the requirements from the seamen, the engineers, and the artillerymen. That is what we ought to do. Someone ought to be made responsible. Ships should be designed in accordance with the views and to meet the requirements of the men who have to fight them, and not to meet the plan of the naval architect.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: These are Mr. White's design.

Lord C. BERESFORD: That is so; but what I want to enforce is that in Germany the designs are first worked out by the sailors, and when they have decided on what is necessary, the architect makes the plans. That is never done at our Admiralty. I believe that the new ships will be good ships. Let us take the *Thunderer* or *Ajax* class. I think most seamen objected to the *Ajax* class because all the offensive power is in the centre of the ship, and if a shell got in, then the whole battery would be unmasked. Now, I am dealing with the new design—the *Trafalgar* design and the *Admiral* design—and I wish to compare the new ships with the *Trafalgar* and the *Admiral* class. The length of the new ship is 380 feet, and it is armoured for 250 feet. The *Trafalgar* is 345 feet in length, and is armoured for 230 feet, while the *Admiral*, with a length of 330 feet, has 150 feet of armour. I believe that the *Admiral* class could be sunk or put out of action without piercing the armour, or, indeed, without firing big guns at all. The new ship presents to an enemy a very much smaller target than the citadel ships of the *Trafalgar* class, and its ammunition and loading places are completely covered. If the citadel be pierced in the *Trafalgar* class—which is perfectly possible—your heavy gun may be put out of action, because there is no armour at the base of the turret. Another advantage of the new class of ships is that they carry four guns, two forward and two aft. The armour deck in the new class of vessels is 8 feet lower than in the *Admiral* class. This, in my opinion, is an enormous advantage. The great danger that besets the *Admiral* class is that an enormous amount of armament may be brought to bear. In the new class you will have a five-inch armour plating which will certainly burst any shells charged with high explosives which we have such a horror of in the old armoured ships. In my opinion, the new ships will be of a better build than have yet been seen in any country, and I think you cannot get vessels better defended, when you take into account the tonnage and the requisite thickness of the armour. The guns are in excellent positions and are excellently defended. What will happen in action we do not know. We may find that a 7lb. shell may explode the magazine. I am satisfied, however, that the protection of the guns will be ample. The hon. Member opposite (Sir E. J. Reed) cannot say that he approves of the auxiliary armament of the *Trafalgar*. There was such an outcry about protecting the auxiliary armament of that ship that four extra inches were put on. I should say that these new ships will run up to from 300 to 500 tons of extra weight, but I maintain that the mode adopted of putting on the armour is the best that could under the circumstances be used. Another point of advantage is that, whereas the freeboard in the barbette class is 18 feet, and in the *Admiral* class 10¼ feet, it is 11½ feet in the turret class. Then, again, the barbette in the new ships will be 23 feet above the water, whereas in the *Trafalgar* it is only 14 feet and in the *Admiral* 20 feet. What you have to do is to hit the enemy's ships as often as you can, and you are not likely to hit them if your guns are under water. There is no doubt that the new ships will have a speed of half a knot more than the *Admiral* class, which is a point of great importance. As to the question of size, I believe myself that we have now arrived at the maximum of size with due regard to utility and economy. I do not think it will pay either in the Mercantile Marine or in the Navy to build larger vessels with the object of getting more speed out of them, and I do not believe you will get many ships to go faster than this new class, unless you invent a new motive power. There are many reasons for believing that these will be good ships. The Government have acted wisely in trying to find the best type for adoption, and I think that if they are ready to sit down and debate the subject, we are likely to get the best ships the House of Commons can vote. The hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed) said that the *Blake* and the *Blenheim*, which are called protected cruisers, are not protected. Well, this is a case of conpromise. You must sacrifice either speed or a certain amount of armour. My contention during the short time I was at the Admiralty was that the *Blake* and the *Blenheim* should not be armoured, but that they should trust to their speed, and that, I think, was the best compromise that could be adopted. Well, as I have said before, I think the Government are doing right, but that they are going about it in the wrong way. I believe the hon. Gentleman the Civil Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Ashmead Bartlett) told his constituents not long ago that the British Fleet was able to fight the combined fleets of any two Powers.

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT, Sheffield, Ecclesall): No.

LORD C. BERESFORD: Well, then, the papers reported him wrongly.

MR. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I said it ought to be able.

LORD C. BERESFORD: Oh, then, we agree entirely. My opinion is that the country should be made to believe that an expenditure of £21,000,000 is necessary now. I am very glad that the Government are coming round to my view; but I believe that if they came down to the House and said, "Having looked into the question, we find that such and such an expenditure is necessary, and our policy is so and so," they would have met with no opposition from anybody, except those Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite who think we ought always to be at peace. When I criticized the Ministerial Programme some of my brother officers came to me and asked, "Are you going to throw the scheme over?" I answered, "How can I oppose a scheme which is practically my own?" I calculated what was necessary, in addition to the ordinary ship-building votes of the year, to defend all our interests in the event of a war with France alone. We ought not to depart from this principle: that if we go to war with any country we should be in a position to sink every vessel of the enemy, and if you adopt that principle you can take your Navy List and make out the same plan of campaign as I did. The Government told me that was not necessary. Well, my noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton) came round——

LORD G. HAMILTON: I have not come round.

LORD C. BERESFORD: Well, that is one of the most satisfactory statements I have heard, because it will enable us to show how my noble Friend has come round. My brother officers came to me and told me to acquiesce in everything. Well, I am not going to acquiesce in everything. I know that £21,000,000 is not half enough to spend on the Navy, and what the Government ought to do is to tell the people so. My noble Friend (Lord G. Hamilton) has tried to induce the House to believe that his programme will meet the full requirements of the country. I say it will do nothing whatever of the sort. He might just as well think we are all going to believe in the historical associations of this first of April as that we are going to agree with him in that. It cannot hold water at all. My brother officers said to me, "Half a loaf is better than no bread." I said, "Certainly; a quarter of a loaf is better than no bread, but, for goodness sake, let the people know it is a quarter, and not a whole loaf." My noble Friend could not get his colleagues on the Board of Admiralty to sign a paper stating that this scheme is sufficient to meet the requirements of the country. The actual addition to the amount to be spent on the Fleet will be only £9,535,000. I know the Government will get a much better class of ships, but what they ought to do is to keep up the number of their ships, so as to be able to meet a combination of any two Powers against us. According to my noble Friend's (Lord G. Hamilton's) own statement, at the end of five years, the waste, in respect of obsolete vessels, will alone be 67 ships, and this programme will only give us 70 ships. Really, therefore, he is going to add three ships to the Fleet, looking at it from that point of view. My own opinion is that if the case were put before the country in a reasonable sort of way, the electors would be willing to vote anything that might be necessary for their defence, but people, naturally, are filled with doubt, when they hear statements such as are constantly being made on both sides of the House in reference to the strength of the Fleet. I maintain that if we do not insist upon making the Government Departments fully responsible, this sort of thing will go on for ever. We shall be told one month that "Britannia rules the waves," and that we are all right, and the next that we have to pay £21,000,000. My noble

Friend the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) said not long ago that the entire question of the strength of your Fleet depended on your policy. I cannot agree with him, because your policy may alter in a dog-watch, or, if you like, the policy of another country may alter in a dog-watch. You ought to have a Fleet strong enough to defend all your interests and to keep peace. This country ought to have and must have peace; I assure you that those of us who have earnestly taken up this point of the strength of the Navy think more of peace than even Gentlemen opposite, because we are acquainted with the horrors of war. A strong British fleet is a more important factor in the question of the maintenance of the peace of the world than many hon. Members think. The first thing that would be asked by Foreign Powers, if England had a Fleet adequate to meet all her requirements, would be in any emergency—"What will England do?" I entirely object to my noble Friend's argument that the strength of your Fleet depends on your policy.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): Will my noble Friend allow me to interrupt him? I will put my argument in the form of a query. Does he not think the British Fleet would require to be much stronger in the Mediterranean if we held Egypt than if we left her?

LORD C. BERESFORD: That is rather beside the question. I say that to keep the country at peace should be the aim of every Englishman, that in order to do so a strong British Fleet is essential, and that you will never have a strong British Fleet whilst you have a system which allows you to do what you are doing now, and what you did under Lord Northbrook. You should once and for all find out what the standard of your fleet should be, and you should keep it up to that standard, and have, as far as you can, a level estimate every year. There is one other observation I wish to make. I do implore hon. Gentlemen to put on one side all questions as to whose fault it is. Let us look at this as a great national question, and bury all Party questions when we deal with it. I am sure I have not always said kind things of my former colleagues, nor have I allowed their plans to pass without criticism. I have, I know, on one occasion, said I would rather wait a year than have this programme brought forward; but since then I have seen how things are managed by foreign nations. I have seen how good is their organization, how quick and apt they are to get the first advantage, if anything should unfortunately occur, of any circumstance that in these days of steam and speed would give them an advantage in the beginning of a campaign. They are better prepared in matters of detail. The two leading Naval Powers next to ourselves have £4,200,000 more on their annual Naval Estimates than they had 20 years ago, and yet their lives do not depend upon their naval strength, as our lives do. In bringing my views so constantly before the House I desire to support the Government. I hope they will be allowed to get to work soon; for every day we lose important time. The keels of the ships should be laid down as soon as the money is voted. We may debate the system of administration, and even the financial question, afterwards—they admit of debate and argument; but I do not think that the question of our defence and of keeping pace with our commerce does admit of debate. I believe we are all together upon that point; and, therefore, I hope the House, though it may find fault with the Government for this right-about-turn, will assent in enabling them to lay down a number of ships. My argument is that you will not take more than eighteen months to launch the hulls of the vessels, and as soon as the stocks are cleared other keels should be laid down, until we get the ships up to the standard.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): The House always listens with interest and pleasure to the noble Lord, not only on account of his ability and acquaintance with the matters with which he deals, but because of his obvious sincerity and earnestness in the cause he advocates. But I am bound to say that there was at least one part of his speech in which, if his object was to support the policy of the Government, he did not very much advance their cause. I allude to that part of his speech in which he entered at great length into details of the different designs of ships, and carried on a discussion with my hon. Friend near me something similar to that we anticipate at the Institute of Naval Architects on a day not far distant, with the result, I think, of satisfying the greater number of the Committee there was really no fixed principle or standard rule in regard to shipbuilding; that the whole business was such a quagmire of diverse opinions, that it might seem the less money was embarked in it the better. But, approaching the programme of the Government, the first objection I have to make—the first criticism I have to pass on it—is connected with the extreme difficulty of ascertaining what the sum of money involved really amounts to. The noble Lord, in stating his proposals, led off with, and brought into the fore-front of his statement, the good round sum of 21½ millions, and such a figure so stated would naturally be taken —and was as, a matter of fact, at first taken—to mean that there was to be an absolute and actual increase to this extent over and above the ordinary shipbuilding expenditure of the country. But in the further course of his speech, and in subsequent explanations given other figures have been mentioned by the noble Lord and others, and his latest dictum is that the whole sum involved in the programme is 11½ millions for shipbuilding, and even this sum of 11½ millions rests on the supposition that if there were no such proposal as the Government now submit, nothing whatever would be done in the Dockyards or by contract, except the mere replacement of waste in the Navy; so that even here we do not find firm ground to stand upon. Now, I cannot but think this was a mistake, and an error in tactics on the part of the noble Lord. I believe that he would more readily have commended his proposal to us if he had proceeded in a precisely opposite way—if he had, in the first place, endeavoured to show us how very small an increment he proposed over the ordinary rate of shipbuilding expenditure, and then, when he had shown how small that was, he had paraded before us the magnificent catalogue of 0 ships which he would be able to provide for the money. I know that the noble Lord had no idea whatever of misleading the House or anyone by giving such prominence to the big figures with which he started; but he must be aware that when those were put in the foreground they would sink into the public mind, and if I look for motives for adopting that course I think I can suggest two. In the first place, a somewhat unusual and not altogether justifiable course has been followed in this matter. While the House of Commons remained in perfect ignorance of the intentions of the Government, the noble Lord and some of his colleagues were going about discounting the popularity which their scheme might gain for them among the classes in the community interested in naval expenditure; and in favoured places, and in congenial company—at banquets in the City of London and occasionally in the Provinces, taking credit to themselves for the great things they were about to do. It was necessary, therefore, to make as much of it as possible. The second motive was that it was, above all things, necessary to fill the eye, and inflame the imagination, and impress the ingenious mind, of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford) and those officers of the Service who are of his school. Whether they have altogether succeeded in that object I am not very sure, because, from what I know of the noble Lord, I think he is far too shrewd not to see the real state of the case. But I wish to examine this large demand which is made upon us, and to inquire what is involved in it, and what justification is put forward for it, but before I do so I ask the Committee to consider what is the origin of the Government proposal. The noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) did not give quite an accurate account of the origin in his speech. The real origin of this new Naval Programme is to be found in an Amendment moved about this time last year to the Army Estimates asking for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the provision made for the defence of the Empire. I think the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone will agree with me in this. The Government took it into their heads that they were going to be beaten on a Division on that Amendment! I do not believe they would have been, but, however, for fear of that result, they proposed to meet the desire of hon. Members in another way, and to inquire in a way, and to a degree of closeness not hitherto usual, into the state of the defences of the Empire, and, accordingly, they appointed this Committee of Members of the Cabinet of which we have heard so much. The noble Lord somewhat unkindly ignored this incident, and ascribed his present policy to a happy inspiration of the Government, who, he told us, "resolved, after a full survey made of the requirements of the Navy and the country, and having ascertained what the deficiencies were, to do our best to make them good with all the rapidity which was consistent with good construction. Her Majesty's Government determined to adopt that principle, and our new shipbuilding programme is based upon it." Well, if that were a principle spontaneously adopted by Her Majesty's Government, it was a rather sudden resolution on their part, and not altogether consistent with their previous action. For the last few years they had been reducing the Naval Estimates, to gain some degree of temporary popularity, no doubt, possibly in one year to prevent—shall I call it?—the official suicide of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the next year to avoid his criticisms. They have been reducing the Estimates, and assuring us that all was well with the Navy; that it was abundantly adequate; and deprecating sudden and spasmodic movements in shipbuilding. Now, I am not going to dwell at this moment on this line of argument—on these assertions and declarations by the naval authorities of the adequacy of our naval strength — and to found on them my main argument against the Government policy, for I wish rather to consider that upon its merits; but they afford an abundant supply of that *tu quoque* argument so freely made use of from the front Bench opposite. I can imagine, for instance, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been engaged in opposing the Government policy, how he would have revelled and rollicked in the material furnished by so prolific a mine of his favourite argument. But while not dwelling upon them I must observe that the statements to which I refer were not expressions of opinion by private Members which might change with changing times and circumstances, but were the authoritative assertions made by responsible Ministers of the Crown to the House of Commons upon which they sought for and obtained support for their naval policy; so that it was something much more serious than the mere expression of opinion of private Members. But I do not wish to dwell on that part of the subject. The First Lord proceeded in support of the wisdom of the course taken by the Government, to adduce the opinion of the Committee on Naval Estimates, of which I had the honour to be Chairman last year. He said it was a marvellous thing that this body of Members, taken from every part of the House, absolutely agreed with the view the Government had taken. I will read the words the noble Lord used, so as to make this clear—

> "The proposition to which that Committee gave a unanimous assent was to this effect—that any new ship building programme should be based upon a full survey and knowledge of the whole requirements of the Naval Service of the country."

This recommendation of the Committee, said the noble Lord,

> "Was arrived at some months after the decision of the Government, and it is a curious coincidence because it shows that so far from this increase of naval expenditure which we advocate being necessarily associated, as some think it is, with the traditions, training, and predilections of the Tory Party, we have indisputable evidence to the contrary, a body of men specially appointed to consider questions of naval expenditure and temporarily dissociated from their political prejudices have arrived at identically the same conclusions as Her Majesty's Government."

Now, it is only right to say that this Committee determined from the first—and determined rightly—that we had nothing whatever to do with the question of the adequacy or strength of the Navy. We were not appointed to go into the strength of the Navy, and had we done that we should have required to take a very large amount of important evidence. It is quite true we could not exclude questions bearing on this subject when we happened to have a distinguished Admiral before us in his official position, and Members of the Committee did ask such a witness whether he was satisfied with the condition of our Fleet, and with the sufficiency of that Fleet. Anyone who looks at the Report of that Committee will observe the singularly contradictory answers received on this point. But the Committee itself considered that the question of increased expenditure on the Fleet was altogether beyond their functions, and they gave no expression to any opinion on the subject. What they did inquire into was the mode in which the Naval Estimates were framed, and the degree of information, knowledge, and professional opinion which was at the disposal of those who decided upon them in their ultimate shape. As result of our inquiry into that point, an hon. Member whom I see opposite moved an Amendment to the Report to the effect that every year in framing the Estimates—for we were then dealing with the annual Estimates, but an expansive programme such as this—every year in framing the Estimates the Naval Members of the Board of Admiralty should be called upon to state what, in their view, the requirements of the country demanded in shipbuilding, and that that should be plainly put before the Government, and that if those views were overruled then the reason for that course should be recorded. I do not give the words of the Amendment, but that was the effect of it. That Amendment was moved, but it only received the support of three Members of the Committee. But another Amendment was moved by the hon. Member for Oldham and accepted unanimously, to this effect—

> "Your Committee are of opinion that the responsibility of the Board of Admiralty and the Government respectively for the efficiency of the Navy would be more clearly defined and accentuated if the wants of the country were carefully considered, and a programme drawn up and submitted by the First Lord on behalf of the Board to the Cabinet before any decision is taken as to the amount of money to be spent du.ing the year."

This was a very reasonable proposal which the Committee accepted, but it has nothing of the character the First Lord attributed to it. It related solely to the ordinary Estimates of each year, and to their mode of preparation, and, above all, it cannot be quoted as any approval whatever of an increase in naval expenditure, or as in any way superseding the tendency which anyone may have, and which I have not, of associating such a policy with the traditions and predilections of the Tory Party. I thought it necessary to explain this matter on behalf of the Committee on Navy Estimates of last year, and now let me come to the actual proposals of the Government. There are, undoubtedly, two bases on which we may consider and decide what is the requisite strength of the Navy—first, a comparison with other Powers: and, secondly, a review of the duties which would be imposed upon the Fleet in time of war. Those are the two criteria which may be applied. The first of these is a matter on which we can all form a more or less correct judgment, and I would say at once that on the mere comparison with other nations taken by itself I can find no justification for any large extension of our naval strength. But let me, to prevent misunderstanding, say for myself that I accept in the fullest and most complete form the doctrine that it is necessary for this country to hold the supremacy of the seas, and that, further, I accept the doctrine that the test and standard of this supremacy is that our Fleet should be as strong as the combined strength of any other two Fleets in the world. That supremacy I believe to be the traditional possession of this country. I believe it is necessary, on account of our insular position, and the extent of our Colonial Empire, and I further believe that that necessity has not been impaired, but rather increased, by the development of our trade, by the multiplication of our interests in all parts of the globe, and by the increased facility of communication all over the world. But, above all, I wish to point out that we hold that supremacy of the seas with the consent of, and without any injury or grievance to, neighbouring countries. I believe it causes no jealousy among them. Take, for instance, the nation with whom we are more immediately concerned—France, the nation occupying a naval position next to ourselves with a long interval between the second and third—what is the feeling in France on the subject? When I was Secretary to the Admiralty it was my duty to read the debates in the French Chamber and in the Budget Commission in relation to naval affairs; it was my duty, and at the same time it was a source of satisfaction and pleasure to me. I will not go so far as to adopt the cynical saying of the French philosopher, that our greatest pleasure consists in contemplating the misfortunes of other people; but this I will say, that it is a great solace and relief to us to find that other people are not exempt from the distresses and calamities under which we suffer. What did I find in this course of reading which I strongly recommend to any hon. Member afflicted with the idea that our Navy is conducted in a deplorably bad manner? I found the same complaints, the same grumblings, the same condemnations we are so accustomed to hear. They complained that ships took too long to build. In passing, let me congratulate the noble Lord; the credit is due to him and his Colleagues of having, at all events, wiped out that disgrace and source of expenditure from our administration. I am not sure that France has yet got over it. They complained of the slowness in the delivery of guns; they quarrelled over the designs of ships and guns; but what I wish specially to refer to is this—that from first to last, except, perhaps, when an occasional expression fell from some hair-brained fanatic injurious to this country, there was not a word used in debate but expressed full acknowledgment of the fact that the English naval power was the strongest, and ought to be the strongest, in the world. I remember one important authority expressly declared that, in respect to the most important classes of ships, France could not even *rivaliser* with Great Britain. So fully do they admit the superiority of this country. But now let me explain by a few figures the progress of shipbuilding in France in recent years. I may say, putting it briefly, that about 20 years ago France discovered that she had, in the modern sense of the word, no ironclads at all; that her ironclads were all of the original type, wooden built, with iron on the sides, and vessels so constructed were known to be inefficient compared to others, and liable to be racked and torn asunder by the weight of armour on the sides. The French made up their minds that they must create a new fleet of battle-ships. They, therefore, instituted a great programme to be spread over 20 years, and it is in the development of that programme that their shipbuilding expenditure has been increased year by year. The execution has not been, in fact, so fast as they expected. During the years 1863-74 the average annual expenditure on new construction for hulls and engines was £740,709; for the next three years it was increased to about £1,300,000. Our expenditure averaged in the same years £2,220,000. In the years 1878-79-80 there was a very serious check in the shipbuilding in this country. During that period we almost touched low water mark. The French expenditure still continued £1,400,000, and ours was only £1,440,000.

*The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Forwood, Lancashire, Ormskirk): The right hon. Gentleman is wrong in his figures. The expenditure in England in 1877-8 for new construction was £2,922,000.

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I took the figures from the Return which the hon. Gentleman has laid on the Table, a Return of Naval Expenditure from 1859 to 1888 inclusive. The amount, £1,440,000, was very little more than the French expenditure. During the following three years 1881, 1882, and 1883, the French expenditure remained at £1,400,000, while ours was £1,800,000. Since the Northbrook programme has been brought into play the French expenditure has risen to £1,700,000 a-year, while the British expenditure has been £3,120,000. Looking at the relative expenditure of the two countries, therefore, there is no reason for an extravagant expenditure in this country: we have kept well a-head of our rival. With regard to ships in existence and ships building, we have 16 first class-battleships of what I will call the most modern type, ships which have been launched since 1878, while the French have 12 and the Russians five. Of vessels launched before 1878, some of which are among the strongest ships in our Navy, such as the *Inflexible*, the *Téméraire*, and the *Dreadnought*, we have 16; while the French have only two vessels of iron and ten of wood, and the Russians have two. The two French ships, the *Friedland* and *Redoubtable*, are strong vessels; but the ten wooden ships are fast passing into that picturesque category which the French style, "*Sans valeur sérieux*." As to vessels on the stocks, the comparison of this country is not so good; and here I blame the Government. It has always been thought better to keep steadily advancing than to allow an interval when the programme might lapse into nothing. If the Government had laid down new ships in the last two years, even at the risk of increasing the Navy Estimates a little, the sudden spurt which we are now invited to sanction would have been avoided. As it is we have nothing on the stocks, while the French have two ships and the Russians four. I submit to the Committee, therefore, that on this mere comparison of battle ships there is no great argument to be founded in favour of increased expenditure on the part of this country. With regard to armed cruisers, we have nine of the most modern type, the speed of seven of them being over 18 knots, and of two 16 knots. Besides these, we have nine ironclads of the old class that are easily convertible into armed cruisers. They are ships with good lines, with great coal capacity, and modern engines and boilers would no doubt give them great speed. The French have four armed cruisers of 14 knots speed and the Russians nine. France has also two of a high speed building. Taking unarmed cruisers over 15 knots, because of ships below that speed we have too many rather than too few, we have 22, France 11, and Russia one; and of vessels between 16 knots and 17 knots we have 11, while France has nine and Russia two. Then this country also possesses at her command the merchant cruisers of which the First Lord of the Admiralty has spoken. I ask the Committee whether it is not clear that there is no reason in this mere comparison for the large expenditure now proposed? But now I proceed to part company with some of my friends. I admit that this argument is not exhaustive. The comparison with other Powers is not enough. We must take into account, what is often neglected, the requirements of the Empire, and the uses and duties of the Navy in time of war. No doubt it is on this consideration mainly that the Government will justify the policy for which they seek our approval. But the pity of it is that they have given the House no *data* whatever. We do not wish the Government to disclose secrets, but to tell the Committee what the grounds are upon which they make their particular demand. If the Committee of the Cabinet have discussed such questions as the design of vessels and the height of armour belts above the water, I submit that they have done that which it is not their duty to do. It is not the duty of Cabinet Ministers to leave their ordinary work for the purpose of settling the details of a Department—details which should be settled by those who are directly responsible for them. What they were called upon to do was to arrive at some conclusion as to the naval strength which this country requires. If they have arrived at a conclusion on that matter, the Committee ought to have some particulars before voting the money asked for. Apart from the conclusions at which the Government may have arrived, I am strongly of opinion that, upon the grounds of the extensive and increased duties which the Navy will have to discharge in time of war, there is a case for proceeding steadily with that gradual strengthening of the Navy which has been going on for some years, without precipitancy and without panic. On the other hand, I have no sympathy with demands based on exaggerated estimates of our requirements; whether these are put forward in magazine arttcles, or in speeches at public meetings or in this House. And I had occasion last summer to enter a protest against the insidious attempt which was made in connection with the Naval Manœuvres to frighten the country into an expenditure of money on the Navy. No doubt these manœuvres are most useful, and I congratulate the noble Lord on having instituted them, but what I objected to was is the ridiculous movements in the shape of raids round the coast in order to frighten people out of their senses. These movements were unreal and misleading representations of what will actually happen in time of war; and I protest against them, inasmuch as they have the appearance of giving the sanction of our Government and the authorities of the British Admiralty to a kind of warfare which I believe is condemned by international law, by the common feeling of men, and by the comity of nations. But we shall have another opportunity of discussing that question, and I only allude to it in passing. While I thus condemn all exaggerated views in this matter, I am as anxious as anyone to see the Navy strong enough to undertake with efficiency and success all the duties which it can reasonably be expected to perform in time of war. If necessary, and I believe it is not at the present moment strong enough, by all means let the Navy be gradually and reasonably increased. But how can we, devoid of professional advice and information, say to what extent it ought to be strengthened? Surely the Government, before the close of these debates, will vouchsafe to us some facts on which the Committee can build a judgment. The First Lord has told us that Her Majesty's Government consider that the scheme should be "entire in itself, and adequate, not only to our immediate, but also to our future wants." With that view they are suddenly to build 70 vessels. Why 70? Why not 100, or 200, or only 10? What we want to know is upon what principle Her Majesty's Government have arrived at this figure of 70? Surely it is not after all only a hand-to-mouth guess. Can it be that the Government, having been pressed by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford) and others, that noble Lord himself recommending a programme not costing £20,000,000, decided at least to overtrump him by a proposal of £21,500,000, and then discovered that they could have 70 ships for the money? That is the old policy of making the strength of the Navy depend on the Estimates instead of the Estimates upon the strength of the Navy. Unless the Government afford the House more information, that is the only explanation of their policy that will be forthcoming. But let me direct the attention of hon. Members to the real bearing of the figures involved. As I have already mentioned, our average annual expenditure upon new construction during the past five years has been £3,120,000. If this rate of expenditure were continued for the next five years it would amount to £15,600,000. But the new programme, exclusive of armaments, only proposes an expenditure of £16,150,000 in that time, besides £1,550,000 necessary for the completion of ships now building, making together £17,700,000. This is the total expenditure actually contemplated, for I refuse to take into account the problematical sum of £3,000,000, which is intended according to the First Lord, to be utilized "either in laying down new vessels or in reducing the Estimates for the years 1892-93 and 1893-4." The increase, therefore, over the expenditure which will be incurred if the Admiralty merely pursue the old lines in respect to their building programme is only £2,100,000, or an increase of £420,000 a year, and it is, after all, therefore, merely for the sake of this small sum that all this pother is being made. I do not commit myself to the opinion that the present rate of shipbuilding ought to be kept up at so high a figure, or, on the other hand, that it ought to be reduced, for an opinion can only be formed upon a knowledge of facts, and these the Government have not supplied the House with. If the Navy is in some respects deficient, would not the reasonable course be to go on steadily; not reducing the Estimates for two years, and then propounding a great and sensational programme of expenditure, not omitting for one or two years to lay down any battleships, and then laying down ten. If Her Majesty's Government had quietly and steadily continued the old rate of shipbuilding instead of propounding this sensational scheme many advantages would have been secured. We should have avoided all this *fanfaronnade*, which would in itself be something gained. We should have avoided spasmodic expenditure, which is always attended with waste and extravagance. We should have avoided the evils attendant on laying down too many vessels of one kind at once, the disadvantages of which anyone can learn by reading the speeches of the First Lord and of the Secretary of the Admiralty, which are eloquent homilies on this subject. We should also have avoided any occasion for those financial irregularities to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to be lending himself so easily. I will not enter into this branch of the subject, as it will be raised by another Amendment already on the paper; but I will merely point out that the proposals involve that the deficiencies of one year may be set off against the excesses of the next, and the excesses of one year against the deficiencies of the next—a proceeding totally at variance with all established rule—and that the expenditure to be incurred in five years will be spread over seven. Lastly, we should avoid the most unconstitutional course of passing an Act of Parliament constituting the other House of the Legislature the equal co-partner with this House in determining the expenditure of the year. This is not the policy which I would have expected from a prudent Administration. The policy I should have recommended would have been to continue, in such degree, and to such extent, and for such a duration of time as might be necessary, the process of gradually building up the strength of the Navy, until it was fully adequate, in the judgment of the responsible Government and of Parliament, to the duties required of it. This process I am not prepared abruptly to discontinue by rejecting the whole of the Resolution now before us, and I deeply regret that Her Majesty's Government, by the conditions they have attached to their proposals, by the form in which they are put forward, and by this neglect to furnish grounds for the precise extent of this demand, have made it difficult for us to support it, even for those of us who yield to them not one whit in our desire to maintain the position and power of the British Navy.

*Mr. FORWOOD: I think the right hon. Gentleman's speech may be divided into several chapters, some of which are favourable to the plans of the Government, and some of which are not. In the end, the right hon. Gentleman appeared to be somewhat in doubt as to which side of the fence he should come down upon.

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No; I distinctly said I could not interrupt a process, which I thought was a right one, by flatly rejecting the proposals of the Government. I only regretted that the Government had made it so difficult for us to support them.

*Mr. FORWOOD: Mr. Courtney, I shall have to claim the indulgence of the Committee while I lay some figures before it, not for the purpose of any *tu quoque* argument, but in support of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Some charges of inconsistency have been brought against me, and I will as rapidly as possible deal with that branch of the subject which concerns myself personally. The hon. Member for Haggerston has very courteously referred to certain speeches I have made with regard to the comparative strength of the British Navy. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington has also referred to those speeches, though in not quite so courteous tones. [Lord R. Churchill dissented.] The hon. Member for Haggerston has quite correctly quoted me, but he has omitted to notice that a few days after the delivery of one of the speeches referred to, I made another speech in which I pointed out that on the former occasion I had merely quoted figures from an official statement showing the number of different classes of vessels possessed by England compared with those possessed by other Powers, adding that "I left the moral to be drawn by others," as no more difficult argument could be entered upon than to attempt to compare the strength of different ships of war—that it is one upon which naval men differ, and that I, as a civilian, would not attempt to deal with it.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): The words of the hon. Member, which I quoted, were "that the Navy of England is more than equal to the two greatest navies of Europe—those of France and Russia."

*Mr. FORWOOD: The hon. Member quoted me accurately enough, but he did not quote a subsequent paragraph in my remarks where I stated my opinion was based upon a comparison of the numerical strength of the respective navies. An opinion on such a subject may be liable to be changed as events occur. I claim, on behalf of the present Board of Admiralty, that they have taken the best means of ascertaining what is the comparative efficiency of the Navy. The naval manœuvres afforded the first and the best means of ascertaining what vessels of war could do; and after going to the expense of those manœuvres, it would be obstinate folly to ignore the experience so gained for the sake of maintaining a former opinion. The naval manœuvres developed for the first time the probable value of vessels of war in relation to the blockade of an enemy's port. It was from the experience thus gained and upon the advice of a competent Committee appointed to consider the lessons to be learnt from the manœuvres as well as from consultation with an able body of colleagues, that the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty determined upon the Estimates submitted to the House.

Mr. DUFF (Banffshire): May I ask what is the recommendation of the Committee which the hon. Gentleman is referring to?

*Mr. FORWOOD: The paragraph in the Report of the Navy Estimates Committee is—

> "That the responsibility of the Board of Admiralty and of the Government would be more clearly defined and executed if the wants of the country were carefully considered, and a programme drawn up and submitted by the First Lord on behalf of the Board to the Cabinet before a decision was taken as to the amount of money to be spent in the year."

It was in response to that paragraph of the report that the First Lord called for information, and obtained it in the most complete manner possible, as to what would be the wants of the Navy under the present conditions of naval warfare, as these were developed by the naval manœuvres. On that information, and on the recommendations of his advisers, he has framed the programme which has now been submitted to the House. The basis of that programme is that our naval strength should be equal to that of any two Continental nations. The noble Lord behind me (Lord C. Beresford) says that he approves of what the Admiralty have done, but that they have gone the wrong way about it—that they never called around their table the sailors, the constructors, and the artillerymen.

Lord C. BERESFORD: I did not say they never did so, but I want to know whether, in this case, they did so?

*Mr. FORWOOD: Then I can assure my noble Friend that the sailors, constructors, and artillerymen have been engaged during the past six months in considering the details of the various ships that should be included in the Programme, and I do not think that a more business-like, or complete arrangement could have been made to ensure a good and efficient ship. It has been the endeavour of the Admiralty to gain experience, and to prevent a recurrence of past mistakes. One of the most important matters in regard to a vessel is displacement; and care has been taken to leave a sufficient margin, so that when a vessel goes to sea she should float at the draught for which she was designed. Further, it was determined that the trials of ships should not be merely measured mile trials with a forced draught, but that the ships should be taken out to sea, and their speed ascertained by runs of considerable duration at sea. I hope that I have now cleared up the points raised by my noble Friend as to the designs of these ships. But we went further than that. The First Lord has already explained that he was not content to have the opinions of the constructors, and of the members of the Naval Board, but that he submitted the designs of the ships proposed to be built to an independent committee of admirals not connected with the Admiralty. They were perfectly informed on all points, so that their views might have greater weight, and their opinions were unanimously in favour of the craft proposed to be built. I am not going into the question of design further than this: The hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. Reed) when discussing the question of design, proposed a higher wall of iron between the redoubts; but he did not say that the thousand tons of additional weight to be carried must be taken off some other part already protected or some alteration be made in the dimensions of the ship——

*Sir E. REED (Cardiff): The hon. Member is forgetful. I did not advocate any alteration in the design of the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*. I only advocated that they should not have a thousand tons less armour than they already carried.

*Mr. FORWOOD: At any rate, it is clear that the hon. Member has not carefully read the papers circulated with reference to the designs, or he would find that the armament of the new ships will require something like 500 tons additional displacement for the additional auxiliary armament and rounds of ammunition to be carried. The hon. Member for Cardiff, in his speech, endeavoured to belittle the proposals of the Government. ["No, no."] With that object, he compared the expenditure for the coming five years with the expenditure for five previous years. The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken has dealt with the question of expenditure on somewhat the same lines, and he has stated that, with only the average expenditure of the past five years we could have completed what we now propose to do. Now, I am bound to say that since my noble Friend made his statement in this House, and a more complete and lucid statement could not have been made, an endeavour appears to have been made to obscure and confuse the public mind with regard to the figures. If there was a fault in the statement of my noble Friend it was that. In his anxiety todraw a fair and unexaggerated picture of the scheme, the noble Lord understated rather than exaggerated the the programme which he laid before the House. Let me recapitulate the figures quoted by my noble Friend. He said that within the next five years he would finish the vessels now in course of construction and in progress of completion at a cost of £1,500,000; that he would build and complete in the dockyards in the course of the next four years, certain new vessels which he enumerated, at a cost of £8,650,000 for hulls and engines, and that he would provide guns for those vessels at a cost of £2,850,000. Then there would be a certain number of vessels built by contract at a cost of £10,000,000, and my noble Friend finished by stating, as any man of common sense would have stated, that it was necessary to leave a sum of money in hand available for the commencement of new work in our Dockyards. No one dreamt that we were going to cease work in the Dockyards when the Shipbuilding Programme was complete. Whether the House will pass the Navy Estimates in years to come, by appropriating the surplus of £3,000,000 to new construction, or use it for the reduction of the Estimates, I cannot say but we at any rate are entitled to regard it as a provision we have made for work to be carried on in the Dockyards. The hon. Member will see that the total expenditure proposed by my noble Friend thus amounts to £26,000,000. The hon. Member for Cardiff dissents, and has endeavoured to show that when it was compared with our Naval expenditure of the past five years, the increase for the next five years was only £3,900,000, leaving a deficit of £5,200,000 unaccounted for.

LORD R. CHURCHILL (Paddington, S.): The hon. Member for Cardiff spoke of ships, not of armaments.

*MR. FORWOOD: Yes, on ships, not armaments. The hon. Member divided the expenditure on the new programme into two parts—£5,350,000 for armaments, and £16,150,000 for hulls and engines. The cost of the armaments, he said, he would leave on one side. This was rather a curious mode of assessing the cost of a war vessel, for guns and ammunition do not fall from the clouds. We propose to order the guns, to pay for them as we go on. Some such idea may have been entertained by the Government to which the hon. Member belonged; but, as matter of fact people, we are now going to provide guns and to pay for them. The hon. Member further went on to compare the expenditure we propose to incur with the expenditure of the last five years, and he tried to make us believe that the expenditure on the last five years averaged £3,900,000.

*SIR E. REED: On ships.

*MR. FORWOOD: Yes, on ships. Now, I think that quotation of figures is pretty much on a par with the erroneous statements which have been going the round of the Press during the last three months.

*SIR E. REED: I took the figures from a Return laid before the House a few weeks ago on the motion of the noble Lord opposite—a Parliamentary Return.

*MR. FORWOOD: I am about to quote from a Parliamentary Return—Appendix C, Navy Expense Accounts, 1887-8—and if the hon. Member will turn to that Account, and refer to the expenditure in the years 1883-4, 1884-5, 1885-6, 1886-7, and 1887-8, he will find that the total for those five years up to the 31st of March, 1888—the last year for which the Returns are complete is £14,225,000.

*SIR E. REED: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member. I did not take that Return, but I took the cost of construction last year from the Navy Estimates now before us.

*MR. FORWOOD: Then the comparison of the hon. Member is wrong and misleading, because it gives the expenditure with the incidental or establishment charges. £14,225,000 was expended during five years I have mentioned in new construction, irrespective of indirect charges, or an average of £2,845,000 per annum, nearly £500,000 less per annum than the figures the hon. Member gave as his basis for comparison. A comparison between what we now propose and the past five years would, I believe, conclusively prove the financial soundness of the scheme which we have laid before the House. Within the five years ending the 31st of March next, Lord Northbrook's additional programme would have been commenced and finished, including the purchase of a number of torpedo and other craft paid for out of the Votes of Credit. We do not wish to depend on Votes of Credit, but to make our financial arrangements clear and distinct before we enter into shipbuilding engagements. The abnormal expenditure of the past five years represents £4,250,000, which, deducted from the total outlay of £15,000,000 during the period, leaves the normal expenditure of the five years at £2,150,000 per annum. As our ordinary expenditure is to be fixed at £2,650,000, we are proposing to expend an addition of £500,000 per annum to that of the past five years. We believe that £2,650,000 is an amount of money that would maintain the Navy at the standard at which we desire to place it. If our calculations are correct, when the vessels we propose to build are completed, the wastage of the Fleet will amount to £2,650,000 per annum, and if the future House of Commons desire to maintain the Navy at that standard of strength, it will be necessary to expend the sum of £2,650,000, or we should have the Navy falling back, and the former scares repeated with further spasmodic schemes for shipbuilding, altogether unsatisfactory in the interests of the country. At this point it may be convenient that I should refer to the return which has been prepared at the instance of the noble Lord the Member for Paddington.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: Has that return been laid on the Table?

*Mr. FORWOOD: Yes; but not printed. This is a proof which came in to-day for correction, but it is convenient to refer to it in print rather than in manuscript. I desire to give hon. Members an idea of what would be the standard at which the Navy will be placed by our proposal. In 1894 the proposed standard for England's Fleet is 77 armoured vessels and 88 protected vessels. It is estimated that at the same date France will have of vessels ready, building, or projected, 48 armoured and 14 protected; Russia will have 27 armoured vessels, with 3 protected; Germany will have 40 armoured vessels and 10 protected, and Italy will have 19 armoured vessels and 17 protected. I do not give the numbers of the smaller class of vessels. That represents the standard of the Navy at present proposed by the lights now before us, by the experience of the manœuvres, and by the opinions of officers most competent to advise the Admiralty. We consider that when we propose an expenditure we should avoid the faults which have been committed in the past. One great fault of Naval Administration has been that we have had vast paper Fleets, but sufficient money never taken to rapidly complete the vessels. I will take the last period, in 1885-6, when Lord Northbrook's scheme was proposed, the liability then undertaken for new construction involved £9,000,000 sterling to complete the ships building and those to be built. The House will scarcely credit me when I say that to meet that £9,000,000 only £800,000 was added to the normal shipbuilding Vote for the year, which was £2,150,000. Of course there were Votes of Credit taken, and they came to their aid in the course of the year. But the present Government desire to lay down a proper financial programme at the outset, and not to depend on fortuitous Votes of Credit. But the short supply of funds did not stop at shipbuilding. The hon. Member for Cardiff has eliminated guns from his figures, but the question of guns has a most important bearing as regards the readiness and the efficiency of ships for service. In 1885-6, as I have said, £9,000,000 sterling was required to commence and complete the ships included in the programme. And what was the amount of money that was taken for the guns? The total amount for guns and warlike stores, which were then provided by the Army Vote, was only £1,000,000 sterling. As it takes about half a million annually for the ordinary normal equipment and service of the Fleet, practically only £500,000 was taken on account of guns and munitions for that vast amount of shipbuilding. Comparing with that the proposed provision for the same purpose, in the coming year the present Admiralty take £1,000,000 in their Ordnance Vote for guns, &c., with a shipbuilding liability of £7,500,000, as against £500,000 on a shipbuilding liability of £9,000,000. In the four years ending in 1886 the Ordnance Vote for the Army only amounted to a total of £3,000,000, or an average of £750,000 per annum, excluding Votes of Credit. Deducting the annual requirements, the amount available for arming new ships was therefore only £1,000,000. As eleven millions in value of new ships had been laid down in that period, requiring £3,500,000 for armament, the deficiency of financial provision is at once apparent. I think there can be very little doubt that much of our trouble has arisen from this want of prescience in the past. We are determined, if possible, to prevent this in the future. We know, to our own cost, what a disturbance there is in the year's finance by not making a proper provision, and not laying down an adequate programme. Let us take the most recent of all—Lord Northbrook's programme. It was estimated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, that £800,000 would be required for three years, £60,000 in the fourth year, and £500,000 in the fifth year. The right hon. Gentleman was wrong to the extent of something like £1,100,000, and that proved an additional burden upon those who next came into Office, and disturbed seriously the arrangements of the Admiralty. There is one more point which I wish to emphasize. I desire to put before the Committee the value, in an economical point of view, of determining a programme, and carrying it out some few years in advance. The cost of our ships has been vastly increased by reason of there being no predetermined arrangement as to the amount of money to be spent from year to year. The proportion of expenditure devoted to new construction in the last 20 years is as follows, if the whole estimates are taken: In the first five years, only 12 per cent of the whole estimates went for new construction in ships; in the next five years the proportion was 17 per cent; in the following five years it was 15 per cent; and in the last five years, I am glad to say, 24 per cent of the total estimate went into ships. I have taken out the cost of six cruisers and six armoured vessels built during the period when the smallest percentage went into new ships, and have compared it with the cost of armoured vessels and cruisers when 24 per cent of the total estimate went into ships. I find that six armoured vessels and seven cruisers built in the lowest period were estimated to cost £2,250,000, and the actual cost was £3,000,000, or an increase of 30 per cent. In the last five years nine armoured vessels and six cruisers, costing over £6,000,000 have been built within £15,000 of the estimate laid before the House. These figures point to the necessity and importance, from an economical and administrative point of view, of laying down a programme and taking measures that shall be adhered to, and that no spasmodic efforts and changes shall be made to alter the programme. I need not dwell now upon the Constitutional question. I am too young a Member of the House to dwell on what is involved in placing this expenditure in a Bill; but, as far as I have been able to judge of the practice of the House, it is a common and everyday occurrence for the House to make contracts, such as mail contracts, and to enter into engagements with individuals for a term of years for which the payment is to be met by money to be annually voted by Parliament. I see no difference between that course and the portion of the programme to be built in the dockyards in the one Bill with the contract portion, and that this fixed sum of money should be annually voted by Parliament as it annually votes money for other services. I apologize to the Committee for having detained it so long a time, but I have endeavoured to place before it as the reasons which I believe make the proposals to be the most economical which could be submitted by the Admiralty.

*MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green): I shall certainly not follow the hon. Gentleman who has just addressed the House with his statement, but I shall approach this subject entirely from the standpoint of the taxpayer, and in doing so I can assure the noble and gallant Lord (Lord Charles Beresford) and other Members of this House connected with the Navy that I have no wish whatever to depreciate the great services of the Navy, or to cripple it in any way for funds whenever these funds are necessary. But I have endeavoured to ascertain for myself with regard to the condition of our Navy, from the reports of inquiries which have taken place during some considerable time past, what is the actual condition of that Service. I have listened to all the speeches which have been made on this subject since this debate first commenced, including the speech of the noble Lord who introduced it, and I do not understand yet the condition of the Navy, and I do not think very much light has been thrown upon the condition of the Navy by the addresses which have been delivered. "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Certainly, so far as the condition of the Navy is concerned, we find men who are supposed to be experts differing very widely indeed as to the actual condition of the Navy. I hope I shall not weary the House if I recall the Committee again to some statements made by those who are supposed to be responsible for the Navy—those, at any rate, who are responsible to this House for giving, and who ought to give, something like accurate information. It is not very long ago that the First Lord of the Admiralty made a speech in which he reviewed the condition of the Navy, and compared it with the navies of Foreign Powers. He boasted at that time, and pointed out to an admiring audience, that our Navy was equal to the navies of the three greatest European Powers.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I said nothing of the kind. What he means is that I said we had in commission as many ships as any three Foreign Powers.

*Mr. HOWELL: I accept the hon. Lord's words, but let the House judge for itself. The noble Lord in the autumn of 1886, speaking at the Guildhall, said "the number of Her Majesty's ships which at the present moment were in commission, both armoured and unarmoured, exceeded the combined force of three of the greatest naval European Powers." And I very well remember that the hon. Member for Woolwich said on that occasion, if such be the condition of the Navy, it is certainly not due to the noble Lord, for he has only just taken office; but, Mr. Courtney, since then we have been spending a very considerable amount of money, and the noble Lord and his colleagues have been pushing forward this programme of Lord Northbrook's, that has been referred to again and again. A very considerable amount of money has been spent in recent times, which certainly ought to have placed the Navy in something like an efficient condition, if it is ever to be so. The amounts spent since that time have been £13,250,000 in the following year, £13,000,000 in the next year, and nearly £14,000,000 in the current year. But the noble Lord demurred to my interpretation of the speech at the Guildhall, as though he did not mean it. But the noble Lord did something more. He came down to the House and said practically, the Navy is in such a splendid condition that we are able to reduce the Naval Vote this year, and the Naval Vote was reduced, and a number of men were struck off.

Lord G. HAMILTON: No.

*Mr. HOWELL: What! does the noble Lord say "No"? Was there not a reduction made?

Lord G. HAMILTON: No.

*Mr. HOWELL: Well, all I can say is that we were promised a reduction, and if the Supplementary Votes exceeded it, that is quite another matter. Certainly, the number of men was reduced by the noble Lord. The noble Lord does not say "No" to that. The number of men was reduced by 100.

Lord G. HAMILTON: No.

*Mr. HOWELL: Well, all I can say is, Mr. Courtney, that those who are responsible for the Returns and Papers published by the authority of this House have not given us honourable and faithful Returns, for the Returns show an actual reduction of 100 men. I shall have an opportunity, perhaps, in later stages of this discussion to refer to the matter again, and I will ask some hon. Members who are going to take part in it to refer to the Navy Estimates, in which they will find that the actual reduction was proposed by the noble Lord, and that the number of men was reduced to the number I have stated. But, Mr. Courtney, I have a right to go back somewhat further with regard to this question. Figures have been referred to going back over a number of years, leaving out altogether the expenditure on the Navy, speaking generally, and including stores and men. Let us see what has been spent on shipbuilding alone, as this is a shipbuilding Vote. I think I am correct in saying that the life of a ship is from 20 to 22 years; that is, supposing she has not got on a rock or sunk in a quicksand. My hon. Friend near me says in 20 years she is obsolete, and it does seem as though ships of war became obsolete very quickly indeed. There is at the present time many hon. Members in this House who are supposed to be experts, these dispute as to the value of certain vessels laid down within a very short period of time. That is a question for those experts to settle among themselves. But, so far as the Members of this House are concerned, I take it that it is our duty to withhold this Vote until the experts have settled what kind of a ship of war is to be built, and what that ship of war is to be worth as a fighting ship after it is built. I find the total sum spent up to the date when the inquiry was instituted was, for shipbuilding alone, £33,364,000, in 18 years. Now, taking the life of a ship of war at 20 years, that amount ought to have given us a magnificent Fleet, more than equal to that which the right hon. Gentleman said we were equal to in 1866. Beyond this we spent £16,000,000 in repairing those ships during those 18 years. It would thus seem that the cost of repairing comes to nearly half the total cost of our shipbuilding, and if this be not a sad instance of waste, mismanagement, and mis-spent money, I do not know what would be. The Secretary to the Admiralty wanted to eliminate the incidental Dockyard charges, but I say that they are a part of the shipbuilding programme, and that if you eliminate them you cannot make the necessary comparisons. These incidental charges amount to over nine and a quarter millions; consequently there was more than £58,500,000 spent in 18 years, while the ordinary life of a war-ship is said to be equal to 21 or 22 years. This is altogether exclusive of naval stores, which would make the cost enormously greater. But then comes the expenditure of the noble Lord, and his able colleagues, who are going to set everything right in regard to the Navy, and this has added a large sum to the total cost, so that in the aggregate, up to the present time, we have spent in twenty years seventy-one millions of money, and yet we are told by experts in the House that we have not a Fleet equal to what is necessary to compete with the Fleets of two of the largest European Naval Powers. If it be true that we have not a Fleet sufficient for this purpose, then, I say, we ought to have, and that if the money of this country had been well spent we ought to have had a Fleet equal to those, not only of two or three of the great European Naval Powers, but equal to the combined Fleets of the whole world. If we have not such a Fleet, whose fault is it? It is not the fault of this House, because the money has been voted. This House has never withheld the money for the building or manning of our ships whenever it has been required, and if we have not such a Fleet as I have indicated someone is certainly at fault. Those who have paid any attention to the management of the Navy know there is a large amount of blame which ought to be laid somewhere; and, as far as I am concerned, I am not disposed to permit this point to be lost sight of in academical discussions between experts on this and on the other side of the House. It is all very well for Gentlemen who have been in office on this or on the other side of the House to bandy words and figures as to the right of this and the wrongs of that; but, as far as we who sit on these Benches are concerned, what we want to do is to fix on the right shoulders the responsibility of permitting our Fleet to drift into the sad and dire condition in which it is now supposed to be. I am not laying the blame on that side of the House any more than on this; it matters not to me who is to blame, but I say we have a right to know who it is we should blame. When the noble Lord and others opposite speak of the splendid condition of our Navy, it shows that they have not made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the facts in connection with the Department they administer. I may say I have just had placed in my hands a copy of the words used by the noble Lord, to which I referred a short time ago. In July, 1887, the noble Lord said—

> "The Navy Estimates of this year show a reduction of £800,000. I stated in the Memorandum to which I was referring that I was satisfied that for years to come there would be a steady reduction of expenditure."

and so on. I do not think it necessary to carry this further, because the matter is within the knowledge of Members of the House, and I do not wish to prolong the debate; but if the noble Lord should question my statement as to the words he used, I have them here, and they can be produced at his demand. With regard to this question of responsibility for the condition of the Navy, I may say that I have paid considerable attention to the various inquiries instituted during the last few years, and I have hoped, and hoped, and hoped on, that sooner or later I should find—I trust sooner rather than later—that we shall, at least, be able to fix something like responsibility on someone with regard to the condition of the Navy and the expenditure in carrying out our shipbuilding programme. On carefully reading the Reports of the Departmental Committees of 1885 and 1886—Committees not very likely to report strongly against the Departments with which they were connected—I found that they reverted to the Reports of older Committees, and endorsed what those Committees had said with respect to the utter absence of control on the part of the Admiralty in regard to our Dockyards. It seems to me that the noble Lord has not read these Reports, although, in a memorandum on some of them, the reference to one Committee was extended, and another Committee was appointed to carry on the inquiry in consequence of the sad state of affairs that had been brought to light. I followed the inquiries instituted by those Committees, in order that I might find that the responsibility and control were absolutely fixed; but I found nothing of the kind, and I have met with nothing in the later authoritative statements in this House to assure me that the responsibility has really been fixed. It is possible the noble Lord may say that some of the things recommended by those Committees have been agreed to; but I want evidence of the fact before I believe it. The Secretary to the Admiralty laughs, but I have not, as a private Member, the opportunity of knowing except from Blue Books and Returns how these things have been dealt with. My complaint is with regard to the management of the Admiralty in the administration of the Dockyards. I, for one, should be willing practically to assent to what is now proposed if I could be sure the money would be well spent, and achieve the object for which it is asked—not that I think the way in which the money is to be dealt with is right, because it is proposed that a large sum is to be paid over to a Government which may be out of office long years before its programme can be fulfilled. I will now refer to a matter to which I have before called attention, and which I find is carefully evaded by the First Lord of the Admiralty. I have spoken of the want of responsibility, as well as of control, and I want to know who it is that is absolutely responsible for a completed ship of war? Perhaps hon. Members who laugh will be good enough to listen to what I have to say. I ask who is responsible for the completed ship of war—for the war machine or fighting machine she should be when fully built and equipped, and with all her armaments upon her? As far as I am able to gather—and I have not the means of getting at the pigeon-holes of the Admiralty—the Chief Constructor of the Navy says he is not responsible. Who, then, is? The noble Lord opposite appeared to be unaware of what I referred to when I first brought the matter before the House. I will call his attention to Question 7,957 in the Report of the Select Committee on the Navy Estimates, published last August. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) asked the Chief Constructor of the Navy—

> "Do you consider yourself as being responsible for the battle-worthiness of a ship as well as for its sea-worthiness?—Mr. White (Chief Constructor of the Navy): No; certainly not.
>
> "Question 7,958—The hon. Member for Preston: Who are the people responsible for the battle-worthiness of a ship?—Mr. White: I should say the members of the Board of Admiralty, who ordered the ship."

I have been reading some further Questions and Answers, and I find that the Naval Lords of the Admiralty did not admit that they were either severally or jointly responsible for the battle-worthiness of a ship. I want to know, are we to have ships built and engines put on board of double the power required, and armour fixed upon them much heavier than was ever intended, together with heavier armaments than they ought to carry, so that the ships display a natural desire to go to the bottom when they are taken out to sea, and is no one to be held responsible? I want to know, Mr. Courtney, who is responsible for such a state of things? The First Lord of the Admiralty said he could see no mention of the matter in the Report; but the noble Lord and his friends took very good care that it should not appear in the Report, for he and half-a-dozen of his colleagues, most of whom were, or had been in the past connected with the Admiralty, voted against its inclusion in the Report. Well, the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Preston voted in the minority. Why, I ask, was it not referred to in the Report? It was that the Admiralty might escape absolute responsibility for their conduct in connection with the building of ships of war, and equipping and manning them, and sending them out as fighting machines; and until we have some kind of satisfactory answer to this question, I say the House is in duty bound to withhold its hand, and not to vote this twenty-one millions to be expended on the Navy in the construction of ships which when built either go to the bottom of the sea, or are rendered obsolete in the course of a few years. My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff has called attention to some of these matters, but I must say that, in his case, the roaring lion of the *Times* was like a sucking dove when he discussed this matter, and I was very sorry indeed to see that with him the subject narrowed down into the discussion of a mere technical question as to what was to be done, supposing the money should be voted. I, on the contrary, hope that the money will not be voted, and, so far as I am concerned, I shall take every opportunity I can to prevent its being voted, and whenever a Vote in connection with it is put in this House I shall record my vote against it. A lot of this money is to be spent in purchasing ships to be built by contract, and I wish it were possible for the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty, for the Secretary to the Admiralty, or for some other responsible person, to give the House some information with regard to the manner in which these contracts will be entered into. The Reports, to which I have before referred, show that there has been a great deal of looseness in connection with Navy contracts and in connection with the building of vessels. The Select Committee which investigated the system of purchase and contract in the Navy found that alternative tenders were accepted; that alternative designs were presented; and that, in many instances, triple engines were put in the place of other engines tendered for. Now, Sir, let me ask business men in this House—and not hon. Gentlemen who are mere fighting men connected with the Navy—let me ask business men who know what contracts are, whether, under ordinary circumstances, if alternative tenders came before them, they would accept them? For myself, I have sufficient knowledge to say that I look with considerable suspicion upon any such tenders, because, whenever an alternative design or tender is put before a Committee, it enables the friends of the contractor to plead for that contractor getting the work, and to urge upon the Committee the advantages of the alternative tender. If men at the Admiralty are capable of making designs for ships, what need is there for these alternative designs? The fact is, when the design leaves the Chief Constructor's office, it ought to be complete in every part, and there should be no necessity whatever for those alterations in design which so enormously run up the cost. It is evident the Admiralty, in connection with these matters, do not know what they want; they neither know the form of the ship, what it will carry, nor scarcely anything else in connection with it, and when the ship is laid down the Admiralty alter it from time to time accordingly as things may strike them. This they call designing and constructing for the Navy. No wonder, then, that we have ships, if I may speak in a figurative sense, of neither classic, Gothic, or any other kind of design. Under ordinary circumstances, I am bound to say, I think we shall be better served by contractors—by good contracting firms—than if we have the ships built in Her Majesty's Dockyards. The Dockyards, at any rate, might do the naval repairs; but, so far as one can judge, they are not the best fitted for constructing ships for the Navy, and, therefore, I do not object to a large portion of the money being spent in contracts, provided always that the designs are complete, that the tenders are complete, and that the contracts are made for the kind of ship which is absolutely required by the Admiralty. I hope, Mr. Courtney, that something may be done to reform the present system of managing the Dockyards, for the Select Committee had certain matters before it which certainly gave rise to the impression that there was need of, and room for, reform. Indeed, some hon. Members have asked me whether I have not thought that there have been frauds to a considerable extent in connection with this management. So far as I am concerned, I can point to nothing that would support any such conclusion, but I am bound to say that, if frauds have not taken place in connection with the Admiralty and Navy, and especially in connection with the management of Her Majesty's Dockyards, then that the officers having command of the yards must be perfect paragons of perfection. And for this simple reason, Sir, that every opportunity has been placed in their way to commit fraud on a wholesale scale. I say that advisedly, and the noble Lord may, if he can, disprove it. I may point to one matter—namely, the passing into stores of goods supplied by contractors without being properly viewed, without being passed by men competent to judge of their quality and value, and even passing into the stores without going through the storekeeper's account except incidentally after the stores have been removed to the place where they are to be consumed. If this does not point the way for fraud, it, at any rate, does give an opportunity to the contractors to tip the men who pass in the goods. I do not say that the contractors have tipped the men, or that the men have accepted tips from the contractor, but I do say that to leave matters in this state is to give an opportunity for corruption such as should not prevail. Then with regard to the manner in which the stores have been dealt with. Here, again, there have been ample opportunities for corruption, unless the officers were like Cæsar's wife, not only absolutely above suspicion, but absolutely above corruption. There seems to have been no system by which a proper check can be kept in regard to the stores in the Dockyards, and I look upon this matter as somewhat serious, especially when we remember that our first line of defence is, and possibly at some time our only line of defence may be, our gallant Navy. We have a right, therefore, to see that the stores passed in for the use of the Navy, for the construction of ships, and for the armament of ships, are of first-rate quality, and such as have been contracted for. There is another point which I hope the First Lord of the Admiralty will give some attention to. A plan has grown up in the Dockyards of making payments for time which was not worked. in order to pay men for overtime said to be worked, or, to put it in plain language, paying dummies for time not worked, in order to have a fund at command out of which to pay men working overtime. If such a system has been allowed to prevail, the officers connected with Her Majesty's Navy must be pinks of perfection indeed if it gives rise to no fraud. Again, the Auditor General points out that a system has grown up of charging to one Vote expenditure incurred under another Vote; and I venture to say that if this system is allowed to go on, we never shall have a Fleet strong enough to satisfy the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone, or any other man who wishes to see the Fleet really in a condition fit for war, should war unfortunately come. Then, again, there has been a practice of paying for goods on the supposition that they will be delivered at some future time. I suppose this happens sometimes when Her Majesty's Government find that they have money left in their hands towards the close of the financial year, and do not know exactly what to do with it, and so they pay their contractors in advance. Finally, Sir, there is the general question of the absolute absence of supervision and control on the part of the Admiralty. I ask the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone, who has, by his speech to-night, practically endorsed the programme of the Government, whether he means to stand to his guns, and whether he means to demand that we shall have absolute supervision and control, financially and otherwise, with regard to public expenditure, before we vote this sum which is now asked for? I hope that the noble Lord, as well as his noble Friend the Member for South Paddington, will not be found to be among those "who would, but dare not." Now is the time; now is a favourable opportunity; because I believe that hon. Members on this side of the House would be prepared to vote any reasonable sum for strengthening the Navy, if they were absolutely sure that the money would be well spent. We might forget for once our Party politics, and deal with this question from a national standpoint, but we cannot do it unless hon. Members opposite, who have condemned the mismanagement, and want of control in connection with the Navy generally, will stand by us and fight out this question. The noble Lord, the First Lord of the Admiralty at the commencement of his brilliant career in connection with the Admiralty, boasted that the Navy of England was in splendid condition. Since he has been in office, we have spent a large sum of money in strengthening the Navy, and hon. Members have shown in this debate that, though the Navy was strong in 1886, and though we have since spent considerable sums, yet experts have since shown that the Navy is in a sad condition: so sad, indeed, that the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone says that instead of twenty-one millions, we ought to spend forty-two millions on it. Yes, Mr. Courtney, and very likely we ought to spend twice forty-two millions to put it into a state sufficient to satisfy some hon. and gallant Gentlemen in this House, especially if the old methods of administration are to be pursued. I am as anxious as any man that our Navy shall be efficient and well-equipped—that our ships shall be well built and well armed—but I want it to be done with due economy and with due care for the taxpayers' money. If the House will grant me one or two minutes longer, I will refer to the very latest Return which came into my hands, namely, the Return showing how the Navy is to be strengthened under the new Naval programme. The noble Lord, as I have already pointed out, proposed to effect under his ordinary Estimates a reduction of 100 men.

Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: No; that is not so, the number of boys is to be reduced, but the number of men is to be largely increased.

*Mr. HOWELL: Nothing is said in the Return about the boys; but I wish now to point out in what manner the noble Lord proposes to increase the strength of the Navy. He proposes to add 3,000 men, and how is that total of 3,000 made up? I find under the head "Officers" we are to have an increase of 2,193; under the head "Coastguard," we are to have an increase of 200 petty officers and seamen, and under the head "Marines," we are to have an increase of two commissioned officers, 57 Staff-officers and sergeants, and 180 buglers and musicians. Thus we are to have 180 buglers and musicians to play a tune while 2,193 officers dance, and 860 men of the rank and file are to bring up the rear. This is the way in which the Navy is to be strengthened. Of course I may not have read the figures accurately, but that is how they appear to me on the Return, and as I gather it, the increase of 3,000 men only provides for 860 actual working men of the rank and file class. I leave this matter, as indeed, I am compelled to leave many others, to be settled by the experts, but in conclusion, I can only express the hope that the Committee will insist, before it sanctions any further expenditure on the Navy, that the money shall only be spent for the benefit of the Service for which it is asked.

*Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): In following the hon. Member I must say that, although I am somewhat indifferent to the general charges which he has brought against the Admiralty, I should have been glad to hear detailed charges which could have been answered by my noble Friend the Head of the Admiralty. Nearly all the hon. Members who have spoken have been unable to resist the fascination of dealing with figures; yet, strange to say, in no single case have they agreed, and I am almost disposed to assert that they have not approached the truth either. Now, Sir, I am profoundly indifferent to all these financial investigations. I care not in the least whether the £21,500,000, which I trust will be voted before long, would have been made up in the course of the ordinary Estimates or not; the fact I grasp is that if the House sanctions the proposals of the Government there is tolerable certainty that within four or five years the Naval programme of my noble Friend will be completed. What security should we have that this increase in the Navy which is so essential would be carried out in the ordinary Naval proposals made from year to year? Sir, while I am disposed to agree with my noble Friend the Member for Marylebone when he says he wishes the increase had been greater than it is, yet I am content with, and am glad to accept, what is offered to us. I think it is a great advantage to us to have the programme clearly defined, and so far as is possible to have an actual and absolute undertaking that it shall be completed at the end of four or five years; and therefore, Mr. Courtney, I do not see that these further investigations are necessary. With regard to the strength of the Fleet, no exact comparison can be drawn between our Navy and those of foreign nations, because there is no common basis to which they can be referred. In my judgment, however, the strength of our Fleet is not up to the strength it ought to be, either in relation to the fleets of Foreign Powers or in relation to the duties it may be called upon to perform. It is conceded, I believe, by most people in England, and was specially conceded by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), that we must, owing to our unique position, have command at any rate of the home seas. If that be so, it follows that the movements of our Fleets are not dependent upon the wants of our home Government or upon our own volition, but are dependent upon the movements of the enemies' fleets. In the event of war we should be compelled constantly to watch the fleet of the enemy. If that be conceded, who will deny that we ought to have a Fleet superior in strength to the fleets of Foreign Powers. That which is true of the home seas is also true of the Indian seas and other seas. Those who are familiar with the naval history of the last century will recollect that alike in the home seas and in the East and West Indies the same necessity constantly existed to watch the fleets of Foreign Powers. It is sometimes said that the many changes of the last 30 or 40 years have prejudiced our naval superiority, that is to say, that steam, for example, has placed us in a less satisfactory position with reference to Foreign Powers than we formerly held. I think that is a mistake. I also think it is a mistake to say that less skill, less knowledge, less experience, are required to command one of Her Majesty's ships at present than used to be the case formerly; further, I say they are mistaken who contend that the peculiar characteristic of our sailors and seamen's skill which did so much to secure the successes of the old wars, have now disappeared. In this respect I view the future without any apprehension. I trust that our officers, and I believe that our seamen will have as large a field for their peculiar abilities in the future as they have had in the past. I purpose now to deal with the more professional matters alluded to by the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed). I think it must be evident that when a person of such great reputation as a naval constructor as my hon. Friend attacks with his characteristic vigour the proposals of the Government, it is not improper that some one on this side should reply to him. My hon. Friend has always taken a strong line against those vessels which are known as the *Admiral* class. He now says that the vessels of the new type are no more safe than the vessels of the *Admiral* class.

*Sir E. J. REED (Cardiff): No, I did not say that. I am quite prepared to admit that the special features of the *Admiral* class, so far as the protection of the ship is concerned, were somewhat mitigated in favour of those new vessels.

*Commander BETHELL: I certainly understood that my hon. Friend considered that the new vessels would suffer under the same grave charges as the vessels of the *Admiral* type. I am very glad indeed if that is not the case. Well, the *gravamen* of the charge made against the *Admiral* type of ships was that if their unarmoured ends were shot away they would be placed in a position of unstable equilibrium or approaching unstable equilibrium——

*Sir E. J. REED: And that they would sink.

*Commander BETHELL: And of course they would sink. Now, I am not in a position to say whether that would be true or not, but that has nothing whatever to do with the present argument. But the vessels of the new type are, by the admission of my hon. Friend, safe, in so far as the building is concerned, from being placed in a position approaching to unstable equilibrium by the fact of their unarmoured ends being shot away; he has admitted that the *Trafalgar* type, so far as stability is concerned, are safe, and the new vessels will have the same amount of unarmoured ends as the *Trafalgar* type. Thus the most grave defect in the *Admiral* type clearly does not exist in the new type. But now note the charge brought against the new vessels. They are covered with armour only five inches thick, and my hon. Friend contends that if they become inclined a matter of four, five, or six degrees the five inch armour would be much more readily perforated than the stouter armour placed on the sides of the *Trafalgar*. No doubt the *Trafalgar* type has a great advantage over the new type in this respect that we must see whether there are not compensating advantages. My hon. Friend is obliged to assume that the vessels are heeling over, but when that happens with the *Trnfalgar*, as well as to the new type of ship, the opposite side is exposed to any chance projectile of the enemy; but remember that this advantage to which both vessels are exposed modifies the disparity which exists between them, so far as the danger due to thinner armour is concerned. Let me illustrate it in this way. Let the Committee take the numbers six and four as representing the danger to one and the other; add another number 10 to each of them as representing the common danger to both, the ratio of 16 to 14 is much modified compared with that of six to four. Then my hon. Friend is obliged to assume that the vessel is heeled over a certain number of degrees. My hon. Friend is a great advocate of what we call belted cruisers. Now, belted cruisers, of course, like battleships, are exposed to the danger of being so wounded that they may be heeled over. My hon. Friend has pointed out in a recent speech that the special advantage of belted cruisers is that they are practically safe at the water line, but are liable to be wounded above the belt, although it is possible to repair that. The same argument precisely applies to the vessels which my hon. Friend opposes; there is absolutely no difference, and I do think that, so far as stability is concerned, the new type of ship will be, so far as we can say, less safe than the *Trafalgar*. The new vessels would, I believe, be absolutely safe in the matter of stability. I do not say, for a moment, I am altogether in harmony with the comparatively minor details of those vessels. I agree that it would be much better if the belt be carried round the bows, and I am not sure that it would not be advantageous to strengthen the bows in some way against quick firing-guns. These, however, are minor details. Among the advantages of the new vessels is the fact that they draw approximately a foot less of water than the *Trafalgar*, and also the fact that the guns are placed at a good height from the water. Then, again, there is this singular advantage in the new vessels not possessed by the earlier types. The heavy guns are not now placed close together, but are drawn nearer to each end of the vessel, the result being that you are able to carry a powerful auxiliary central battery, which is an immense advantage in modern warships. Then there is the increase of speed. I am not prepared to say whether these ships will carry more or less than the given weight; but, taking the figures as given to us, I do undoubtedly see certain advantages in them which are not possessed by the *Trafalgar* type. My hon. Friend seems to think that in this matter the issue is between himself and all other nations on the one side, and the British Admiralty on the other. To my mind, the issue is between the Admiralty and all other nations on the one side, and my hon. Friend on the other. Of course, it is an immense advantage if you can afford the weight to dispose your armour in the way my hon. Friend suggests, but it seems to me that there is considerable waste of defences when the special method he advocates is pursued. I should just like to say a few words respecting the speech of my noble Friend the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford). It is undoubtedly admitted by my hon. Friends in this House that one of the most important duties of our Navy is to protect our commerce. My noble Friend several times insisted upon the fact of our interests having so much increased beyond what they were a few years ago, and therefore he insisted upon increased protection. The hon. Member for Haggerston (Mr. Cremer), in his speech the other day, alluded to the opinion expressed by two large shipowners in the House, that it was quite unnecessary for us to increase our Navy for the purpose of protecting our commerce. With the views of one of these hon. Members, the hon. Member for West Hull (Mr. C. H. Wilson), I am more or less well acquainted; but as to the other hon. Member, I have no knowledge, but I make this allusion to inquire why it is these two hon. Gentlemen are inclined to think it is useless to expend money in order to afford protection to our commerce, and I would observe we on this side of the House are somewhat responsible for this, for we are very apt to apply a wrong measure to the extent of our commerce. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone not infrequently places before the House the extent of our commerce measured by tonnage or money value, but in my humble opinion you might almost as well attempt to measure, say, duration by the yard measure, or expansion by the hands of the clock. It is not the amount of tonnage, or the value that should be the gauge of our commerce, but the number of our mercantile ships. I submit to the Committee, as an axiom which, I believe, will be generally accepted, that every vessel duly qualified to sail under the British flag, whether that vessel be large or small, is entitled to the protection of the Navy, whether it be one of the great Atlantic liners or a small coasting collier painfully pursuing her path—each of these has an equal right to the protection of the Navy. If you admit that, it flows from that admission, and is a corollary to it that the only measure of our commerce is the number of ships modified perhaps by the number of voyages; but, at all events, the measure is not tonnage or money value. The tonnage of our commerce has enormously increased, but so has the tonnage of each vessel, and the number of ships carrying our commerce has very little increased, or indeed, if we can rely on statistics, I am disposed to think the number may be absolutely less than the number 40 years ago. There is a little difficulty about the figures, because it is not always explained whether all the small coasting vessels are included or not, but, roughly speaking, the number of vessels is about the same now as in the former period to which the noble Lord (Lord C. Beresford) alluded.

Lord CHARLES BERESFORD: I am sure my hon. and gallant Friend does not wish to misrepresent me. It is quite true what he says as to the tonnage of ships engaged in commerce, but he rather strengthens my case, for though the number of ships may not have increased much below them in the old time, owing to the introduction of steam the number of voyages has enormously increased.

*Commander BETHELL: Yes; the gauge should be compounded of the number of ships and the number of voyages. It is rather a puzzling problem, but the conclusion I arrive at is that the number of voyages may practically be eliminated from our consideration. I am delighted to find that in my criticisms I have really strengthened my noble Friend's argument; it is always a pleasure to me to find myself in harmony with him. But I was going to say, lest it should be urged that I am unreasonable in advocating an increase of the Fleet, that my reply is, first of all, that even though it be true that the number of our ships has not increased, yet it is also true that the means of protecting them has decreased of late years, and many more routes are now open, many more interests are bound up in the trade. I am inclined to think that one of the reasons that animated the hon. Member for West Hull when he said it was no use trying to protect our commerce, so great is its extent, that he was somewhat misled by the calculations sometimes placed before the House.

*Mr. CREMER: I am sure the hon. and gallant Gentleman would not wilfully misquote me. I did not state that the hon. Members for Hull and Jarrow said our Navy was incapable of protecting our commercial marine, but that it required no protection—it was not in danger.

*Commander BETHELL: I do not think there is a material difference, or in the view of the hon. Member for West Hull at any rate.

*Mr. CREMER: Yes; there is a very considerable difference. The hon. and gallant Member states that I attributed to the hon. Member for West Hull the statement that the Navy is inadequate, and not strong enough to protect our commercial marine; but what the hon. Member for Hull did say was, not that the Navy was too weak, but that the commercial marine required no protection—it was not in danger.

*COMMANDER BETHELL: I am quite content to withdraw altogether reference to the statement made by the hon. Member; but quite apart from the statement the hon. Member for Haggerston quoted, and so far as the opinion of the hon. Member for West Hull is concerned, I should be disposed to maintain what I have said. Just another word on the subject. I find it not unfrequently stated in connection with this same subject—this difficulty of protecting our commerce—that it will be greatly increased in future wars by the fact that it will be impossible at any time to use convoys for purposes of protection. I will not argue that point; I simply allude to it because it falls into my argument; but I maintain absolutely there is no reason whatever, so far as I can see, why our commerce in the future should not be protected much in the same way as it was protected in the past. It is my firm belief that we are a little disposed to multiply difficulties, and that our Fleet will be equal to affording that protection to commerce which, though some Gentlemen may say it is unneeded, owing to the excellence of our Mercantile Fleet—yet, I am disposed to say, will be demanded in the future, because I find, turning over the history of the wars of a century and a-half, I find, time after time and year after year, the British merchant and the British shipowner pitifully complaining to the Admiralty and the Government of the day of the want of that protection they so earnestly implored.

*SIR C. M. PALMER (Durham, Jarrow): I must say that the amount proposed to be expended by the Admiralty—£21,000,000—took me by surprise, as it did the country, and I fear made a deep and serious impression abroad; but as it has been explained that the £21,000,000 is not to be in addition to the amount annually voted by Parliament for shipbuilding purposes, I venture to say that what has now been put forward as the programme of the Government is a judicious and very moderate demand. When I say it is a judicious programme, I venture to express the belief that such is the change which is taking place in the type of our ships, that this increased expenditure will continue in future. We must remember that we are now dealing with a different state of things to that which formerly prevailed. Our wooden ships have passed away; these could have been laid away in the Medway and Portsmouth, and refitted when required, whereas our obsolete ironclads cannot with advantage be brought into active service. It has been said that this scare has been got up under the plea of national defence, and if that were so, these ironclads originally built, such as the *Warrior* and *Black Prince*, should be assigned to the coast defences as, from their want of manœvring power and inadequate protection, they are quite unfitted for active service. We must all agree that our Navy is the first and real defence, and, therefore, it is of the highest importance that we should build ships of such a class as always to be in advance of those of other nations—ships which will have the highest speed, be of great power, and carry heavy guns. We should require such ships to be all over the world, in consequence of our greatly extended commerce, the growing importance of our Colonies, and especially because of the great increase of our Mercantile Marine. I am of opinion that the tonnage of the Mercantile Marine has become so enormous that scarcely any Navy could protect it; and the old system of convoys will, in any future war, be discarded. I venture also to think that our food supply is not in the slightest danger, considering the enormous extent of our Mercantile Marine. I have no doubt that if there happened to be a war with Great Powers, and there should be a blockade of the ports, if a cruiser were to escape out of these ports it might damage a number of our merchant ships, but these cruisers would be very soon accounted for, inasmuch as they could not keep at sea more than a certain number of days until they would have to put into port for the purpose of coaling, so that they would soon be traced. So far, therefore, as regards protection of our Mercantile Marine bringing food to this country, no increase of our naval power would avail much. The vessels we ought to build should be those which can keep at sea with a large radius of action, with great capacity for coal, and possessing great speed. I think at no distant date armour-plated vessels will be discarded, and future warfare will be conducted by swift cruisers capable of rapid manœuvres, but at the same time built with such water-tight partitions that, if they come under the ram, they will not sink. I sincerely hope that this increase of the Vote will not induce the Government to increase the Dockyards, either as regards the number of the men or the amount of machinery. I was a Member of a Committee which had to deal with questions relating to the Dockyards: and the Report of the Committee tends to show that to the Dockyards ought to be assigned, in the first place, all the repairs and refits of ships, and that they should be constantly employed up to a certain level. The workmen should not be subject to discharge from time to time, as the Dockyards are situated in parts of the country where discharged workmen cannot find immediate employment. I agree with this Report; and I think that ships can never be built in Dockyards at the same cost as in private yards. On an investigation of these matters, I have found a great difficulty in separating the cost of the construction of ships in the Dockyards from what are called the national charges, and, from the mode in which the men are employed, there is not that amount of work done that we find in private yards. At the same time, I may congratulate the Government and the Admiralty upon a marked and very important improvement in the Dockyard administration. Since they laid down the rule that those who design the ships shall have the designs and plans perfected before the work of constructing the ships is commenced, and not altered until these plans have been completed, they have succeeded in building ships in a much shorter time and at a much smaller cost; and they have no doubt whatever that in future they will find that they will be able to turn out a very much larger amount of tonnage in the Dockyards and elsewhere for the same amount of money. The noble Lord (George Hamilton), in his programme, has cast some reflection on the shipbuilders of this country, who, he hinted, may combine. I will appeal to the noble Lord whether it was really worthy of him to make the observation, because he must know that from the commencement private shipbuilders in this country have taught the Admiralty to build iron ships, and have been most loyal in serving the Admiralty in every possible way. I can assure the Admiralty that there is not the slightest chance of any such combination of shipbuilders to interfere with their tenders. In supporting the Government on this increase of shipbuilding, I venture to hope that they will not build too many ships of one class, because we have not yet arrived at finality in shipbuilding. Year by year we are improving the type and construction of the vessels as well as of Marine engines; and we must assuredly be in advance of any other nation in Naval matters. But if we lay down too many ships of the same type at the one time, they will in a few years become obsolete. One cannot but regret that this programme for increasing the Navy did not occur a couple of years ago, because at that time it would have been a great boon to the nation. We should at that time have had private shipbuilders anxious for the work, and artizans and workmen glad to be employed, whereas at the present moment all the large constructors have their works filled up for more than a year; and I venture to say also that there is not an artizan or workman in this country who is willing and able to work who has not found employment. Therefore, this programme is put before the country at a most inopportune time, and I believe the Government will not get the amount of tonnage built which they anticipate. For the reasons I have given, I quite agree with what the Government are now proposing, and, for my part, whatever may occur, they shall have my support.

*Mr. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): Speaking as a Member of last year's Committee on the Navy Estimates, I must say that there has been great exaggeration in the charges that have been made against the Admiralty. It is certain that in the administration of the Admiralty you could not have the same simplicity of management, the same unity of control, that you have in a private firm, on account of the semi-military character of the administration. But the members of the Committee were very favourably impressed with the changes that have been made in the administration of the Admiralty in recent years. As regards that important matter, the victualling of the Navy, two leading shipowners on the Committee said they would be glad if they could provide their own ships as cheaply with food of such excellent quality as that which is supplied to the Navy. So far as the general administration of the Admiralty is concerned, the evidence given before the Committee showed that the Board of Admiralty has of late effected certain excellent reforms, and that ships can now be turned out of the Government dockyards almost as cheaply and expeditiously as out of private yards. But the Amendment of the hon. Member for Haggerston has raised a totally different question—namely, the desirability of increased expenditure upon the Navy. We shall not really be in a position to discuss the constitutional aspect of the question until we have the Budget before us, because until then we cannot get at the way in which the Government propose to raise the ten millions, which is to be spread over seven years; but the hon. Gentleman the Member for Haggerston has raised the whole question of our Naval policy, and has questioned the expediency of devoting any more money to increasing the strength of our Navy. No more important question could be brought forward, and this debate has had the useful result of showing that very few members of Parliament are ready to take on themselves the responsibility of resisting the demands of the Government for large sums of money to give the country an efficient Navy. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), speaking on behalf of the Leaders of the Opposition, accepted the central principle of this scheme —that the British Navy ought to be equal in strength to those of any two other nations that could be named. Here, then, is an agreement between the two Front Benches, which seems to me to ensure a continuity of our naval policy for many years to come. But I must confess that I have been somewhat disappointed with the speeches of the First Lord and the Secretary to the Admiralty this evening. I had expected a clearer and fuller explanation of the reasons which induced them to bring forward their scheme. We all bear in mind the evidence of Sir A. Hood, who, as First Naval Lord, gave evidence last year that he thought the Navy in very good condition indeed, and that he should be satisfied if he could get six more fast cruisers by the end of 1890. But now this modest demand has been altogether altered. The six cruisers have gone up at one bound to sixty, to say nothing of the additional ten or eleven ironclads. The recent change, indeed, in the policy of the Admiralty is as remarkable as the change of front made by Lord Northbrook a few years ago. The Secretary to the Admiralty to-night has stated that the Naval Manœuvres taught a lesson which induced the Admiralty to change its policy on this subject; but what did the First Lord himself say? He said his policy has always been uniform; that he had laid down certain principles of procedure some months before the Navy Committee adopted that Amendment which asserted that a certain action should be taken to determine what measures were really necessary to put the Navy in an efficient state; and the Secretary to the Admiralty then said our Navy was equal in strength to the Navies of France and Russia combined. This was said some time before the Naval Manœuvres, so that he must have been driven by the Naval Manœuvres to come to the same conclusion as that which he had previously adopted. What, then, I ask, are the real grounds for these proposals of the Government? Hon. Members are practically all agreed that the Navy must be maintained at an adequate strength, not only to defend these shores, but also to protect the great highways of our commerce and ensure that supplies of food are regularly brought into our ports in time of war; but the question is, is its present strength adequate? And as to that Her Majesty's Government have afforded the Committee no substantial facts upon which to base a conclusion. I have picked out a few figures with regard to the French Navy which bear on this question, and I have chosen France, for it is generally admitted that from the navies of any other country we have little or nothing to fear. I do not place any reliance on the rumours as to the probability of General Boulanger picking a quarrel with this country if he were to come to power in France; but, irrespective of any considerations of that kind, we ought to be able to hold our own. Now, from a Paper read by Lord Brassey at the Mansion House a short time ago, it appeared that during the past eight years we have annually spent on new construction £2,620,000, while France has only spent £1,620,000; and these figures, I think, show that, so far as regards keeping up our relative strength to France, we have done all that is required. Again, the capitalized value of the British Navy is estimated at £44,500,000, while that of France is set down at £20,000,000, showing the value of our Fleet to be twice and a-quarter as great as that of the French, and I think it can safely be said that we get as much value for our money as they do. Now, before this debate closes, I think that the Government should give us some more distinct statements as to the causes which have induced them to make proposals for this greatly increased expenditure. Still, whatever we may do in that respect, I am afraid we shall never succeed in pleasing the Admirals, who continue to urge that we are only doing a small portion of that which the country wants. I am sure, speaking for myself as a civilian Member of Parliament, and not at all as a supporter of the Government in this matter, that I resent very keenly the tone which some military and naval Gentlemen have thought fit to assume in speaking of the action of the House of Commons. One noble Lord, in a high position in the Army, has thought it becoming to speak of the "curse of Party Government" as if, whatever the curse of Party Government may be, it is half so bad as the curse of Military Government, to which this country has never been exposed, at all events since the death of Oliver Cromwell. Then we are told about the strong public opinion which was aroused in this country on the subject of the defencelessness of the nation and the weakness of the Government. Well, how has that public opinion been aroused? By what I think I may, without offence, call a Syndicate of Admirals, who have gone about promoting a panic; and whenever anybody is seen to be engaged in defence of the House of Commons, then you see columns upon columns of the *Times* filled by them, and they will hold a public meeting to denounce any unfortunate Member of Parliament who has ventured to think he has a right to say a word about this expenditure. Admirals are very fond of telling us that we had a much stronger Navy in the old days; and I read constantly in the papers letters from Admiral Hornby and Admiral Symonds, who tell us how, in 1812 and 1813, we had a Navy which was four or five times as large as all the navies of the other nations of the world put together. How did that come about? At that time we were at war with all the world; and it was not that we had built the ships ourselves, but that we had burnt, sunk, or captured the vessels of other countries—we had, in fact, effaced the Navies of France, Spain, Denmark, Holland, and all the other maritime countries, until they had no vessels at all. If you read James's Naval History you will there find tabulated statements for each year of the great war, showing how scores of ships were either destroyed or captured and added to the British Navy. An hon. Member (Commander Bethell) spoke of it being the duty of our Navy to watch the fleets of an enemy; but they would have to do a good deal more than watch them in time of war; they would have to go in search of the enemy wherever he could be found, and to burn, sink, or capture every one of his ships. And if we go on doing that for the next 20 years, I venture to think, as in 1813, we shall have a Navy as large as the combined fleets of other Powers. We are constantly told that the armaments of Continental nations render it necessary that we should increase our forces. But setting apart that question for the time, we have not any serious difficulties with any Continental nation. When we are told to beware of France, we must remember that it is not France of the First Napoleon nor of the Third Napoleon we have to deal with, but a mutilated France bowed down by taxation, and scarcely able to find from her resources sufficient money to fortify her inland frontier against Germany. There is no Continental nation which would dare to make war against England without having the risk of another equally powerful Continental State against it as our ally. In former wars in which we were engaged upon the

Continent we very properly fought to maintain the balance of power—to prevent one Continental State from acquiring such undisputed supremacy over the rest that her strength must be a menace to the liberties of England. Our forefathers succeeded in maintaining that balance of power very successfully, so gaining for us the supremacy of the sea. But at the present moment the Continental Powers maintain the balance of power among themselves. These armaments we hear so much talked about are maintained by the different nations for the purpose of preventing either France, Germany, or Russia from acquiring any undisputed superiority upon the Continent. Although I do not think we ought to reckon upon what our allies can do for us when we go to war, yet I bear this fact in mind, that we have never gone to war in Europe without allies, and that in any future war we shall have to a certainty allies far more powerful than we used to have when we were fighting France or Spain. I am afraid, Mr. Courtney, I have been too discursive. I should like to say that there is no one who is more keenly anxious than myself to maintain the greatness of the British Empire, and to assert our superiority in every part of the ocean; but I think that we are sometimes too apt in these days to lose the confidence which belongs to a truly Imperial people. We are apt to disparage ourselves a great deal too much —to think too much of our responsibility and too little of our power and resources. The noble and gallant Lord (Beresford) is always telling us of the very small amount of insurance that we pay for the great commerce that we carry on. Does he think that it is only our Navy that we maintain for the defence of that commerce? Our Army also is useful for such a purpose, as we can send troops for the protection of any threatened point. Suppose that we take the commerce of the whole British Empire, not of the United Kingdom alone. The commerce of the United Kingdom may be taken at £650,000,000, and I believe that statisticians put the commerce of the whole Empire at one thousand millions. But that is a miscalculation; for a great deal of the commerce is taken twice over, three-fourths of the Indian commerce, for instance, being really reckoned in that of the United Kingdom. Therefore, the whole commerce of the Empire is really not more than £700,000,000. Now we spend annually in the United Kingdom £31,000,000 on the Army and Navy, and more than £20,000,000 in India upon our defences; and if we calculate what is spent in our Colonies and Dependencies, we shall find something like £55,000,000 a year is spent on the armaments of the British Empire; and thus you get an insurance of something like 8 per cent on the whole commerce of the Empire. That is a great deal of money to spend, and we are constantly increasing the amount in various ways. When we talk of how little is done for the Navy, surely hon. Members have forgotten that only last year we voted 3½ millions of money very nearly, to constitute the Australian squadron, and to provide the funds for fortifying our coaling stations and commercial ports throughout the world. All that is strengthening the Navy, because it is freeing our ships for operations on the high seas instead of tying them down to the defence of coaling stations which used to be unfortified. Many millions of money have been spent in that way in recent years, not only in this country but in India and the Colonies. I must say that I do not think that the results of all this expenditure are so poor and miserable as it is the habit of people to say. I do not believe myself in the utter defencelessness of the British Empire. I do not believe in the possibility of such a stoppage of our food supply as many people are always talking about. All the fleets of the world could not blockade our coasts, even supposing we had no Fleet to defend them. It would be utterly impossible to make an effective blockade of our coasts. Could they seize our Colonies? No European State would be mad enough to send an expedition to seize Australia. What would be the fate of such an expedition? Depend upon it, this Empire was never more strongly, or better defended, than at the present moment. I will not speak against the proposals of the Government. I shall be glad to see a steady and continuous standard of naval strength maintained; but I do say that it is a pity that any startling or sudden changes should be made, for I believe that there is no nation in the world, and no combination of States, that would not think twice or thrice before they attempted to quarrel with this country.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cockermouth): I congratulate the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, I congratulate the House, and I congratulate the country, above all, I congratulate the Tory Party on the rattling Radical speech which we have just heard from their side of the House. I heard it with the greatest pleasure, and I only hope before the evening is concluded that we shall have as good a Radical speech from the front Opposition Bench. The first thing I have to observe is that it is rather strange that these proposals should have been delayed so long. If we are really in this imminent danger which the Admirals, and Generals, and Captains on the other side tell us we are in, surely the Government ought to have brought this matter before us a little sooner, that we might sleep safely in our beds. To have delayed so long makes me doubt whether there is really the necessity which the Government assume in this matter. I am not going into the Constitutional question; I shall leave that to the wise men of this House. I do not exactly know what is Constitutional and what is unconstitutional. I have very vague ideas on the matter. I have this idea—that it is unconstitutional for an old Parliament, elected two or three years ago, to go into a new question of vital importance without taking the country into its confidence. But what I want to do is to prove two things. First, that there is no necessity for this great and dreadful expenditure which we are called upon to vote; secondly, if it be found to be necessary, the present officials at the Admiralty are not the reliable parties into whose hands the money should go. To prove these two assertions it will be necessary that I should make some quotations. I shall first begin by quoting the Queen's Speech, read on the 21st February, and which nobody can contradict. I have quoted it before, but it cannot be quoted too often. Now, in the Queen's Speech there is a statement to the effect that during the brief period which has elapsed since the close of the last Session nothing has taken place "to affect the cordial relations between myself and other Powers." Well, if nothing has taken place, if nothing has been done since, it appears to me that the Government are making military preparations against Her Majesty's own statement, which really is an act of high treason. Certainly the speech goes on to say that the increasing expenditure on warlike preparations which has been incurred by other European nations has rendered necessary an increase in the precautions which have hitherto been taken for the safety of our own shores, but then the Speech adds that these Powers are uniformly friendly to this country at present. What, then, is there to justify this last scare? I say this vague talk is utterly unworthy of the Government. What is there, then, to justify this increase of expenditure? If the whole of Europe, with its 28,000,000 of armed men, were going to fight against us, no doubt the case would be altered. Then the greatest fire-eaters in the House would admit that our case was hopeless. But against whom are these preparations made? Why do not the Government condescend to particulars? Why do they not tell us against whom they are arming? Is it France? Why, France has enough to do to look after Germany, and we have recently put an affront on France by refusing to send emissaries to the great Exhibition because it was the anniversary of the great Revolution, so little do we care for France. Is it Germany? Why, Germany is our greatest ally. She is busily engaged in watching France, and with her as our ally we are fighting somebody or other in Africa. Is it Russia—that country which is honeycombed with Nihilists, that is to attack us? Surely, we cannot suppose that Russia is going to attack us. Is it Italy? Why, to Italy we have been the only firm and consistent friend throughout her history. Is it Spain? It certainly cannot be Spain, although she has, since the scare began in this country, increased her navy under the imaginary fear, I suppose, that we are going to attack her and that we have some mischief in our minds. What is the use of asking all this, however? I know perfectly well that no one will give me these particulars. And why? You would if you could, but you cannot. Then there is that other grand argument that it is to protect our food supply. Why, the old policy of the Tory

Party was to prevent the people from having food. I have often been charged with trying to rob the poor man of his beer. The President of the Board of Trade is engaged in trying to rob the poor man of his sugar. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer has told the country that we must keep up the flow of our commerce. The truth, however, is that this expenditure is directed, not to keeping up the flow of our commerce, but the flow of promotion; it is directed to keeping up the supply of loaves and fishes for the cormorants of whom the noble Lord spoke the other day. It means outdoor relief for the aristocracy and contracts for great shipbuilders, so that young men on the Treasury Bench, when an election is pending, may go down and offer them as bribes. We all represent the people, or are supposed to do so. But the seven or eight direct Representatives of the working men, who all sit on the Liberal Benches, vote against this expenditure. Why are there not Conservative working men Members? As I say, I believe everyone of the working Men representatives will vote to-night against this expenditure. Are they not as anxious to secure the food supplies of the people as you are? But that was not all that the Chancellor of the Exchequer said. Out he came with the old and plausible platitudes and seducing sophistries always used on these occasions. He told us, "If you want peace, you must be prepared for war." I do not believe in that, and I know of no aphorism which has caused so much mischief and misery as this. It has led Statesmen to confusion, and countries to their overthrow. "If you wish for peace, prepare for war!" Why, Sir, you might just as well say that if you want to keep yourself dry, jump into the water, if you want to keep yourself clean, take lodgings with a chimney sweep; if you want to be quiet and live undisturbed, take a bed over a factory; and if you want to keep sober, take lodgings in a public-house. All the great Military Powers on the Continent have, for the last generation or two, been preparing for war. France, Prussia, Austria, and Germany, have all been keeping up great armies, and what has been the result? Why, every few years we have had a great war. You know well enough that this is not the way to preserve peace. The other day an Irish Member asked a question—the Irish Members are always asking questions—as to whether arms and ammunition were being landed on the West Coast of Africa by an English consigner, and it was then pointed out that this practice was one calculated to lead the savages to fight. Indeed, it put me in memory of a saying by an old African Chief, that he went to war with another tribe because he had had a barrel of gunpowder given him, and he could do nothing else with it. So much for the necessity of the case; so much for the arguments we have heard in favour of this expenditure. Now, I go farther, and I say that we have been altogether misled by the officials of the Admiralty. Do the Government suppose that all the European nations are marauders and robbers? But let us for a moment take it that the food supply of the people is in danger, and that the nations who have hitherto supplied us have suddenly taken it into their heads that it would be better to spend their money in killing us than to gain it by sending food to us. Let us suppose that to be true. Does it afford any reason why this particular plan of the Government should be carried into effect? I find that we have already spent on the Navy during the last five years some sixty millions of pounds; and, surely, if the statements we have heard made by Members of the Government connected with the Admiralty in regard to the Navy are true, they cannot be looked upon as efficient in the performance of their duty, and, therefore, they ought not to be trusted with the expenditure of this money. The Secretary to the Admiralty explained very candidly and very frankly in his speech that opinions may change as events arise. I dare say they do so change; but let us see what are the opinions expressed now, and compare them with those expressed by Admiralty officials a few years ago. Take the statement of the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty himself. In the early part of 1887 over and over again the noble Lord said that our Navy was never so strong in time of peace as it was at that time. Early in the year he drew up a memorandum on our naval affairs, and said we had brought up our naval strength to its proper level as far as cruisers were concerned. And later, in March, 1887, at a meeting of the

Institute of Naval Engineers, he said, "Our Navy is relatively stronger to-day than it has been for many years past." Then, again, on May 2nd he was in his element at a dinner of the Royal Academy, when all the blood and culture of the Services were assembled — an assembly of Jingoism *in excelsis*—a few days in advance of the great Jubilee Naval Review. What did the noble Lord then say? He said that the Fleet which would then be displayed was the strongest which any Sovereign had ever reviewed in time of peace. What has happened to that Fleet? He has had charge of it. Has it gone to the bottom with the *Sultan?* Then, again, in July of the same year, the noble Lord recalled the words of his memorandum that the policy of the Government would be one of "steady reduction of expenditure, and increase of efficiency," and on March 13th he added that he was well within the mark when he said that our Navy was 30 or 40 per cent stronger than that of any other Naval Power. Now, when the noble Lord said that, he was either right or wrong. If he was right, then this new expenditure was a most wicked thing; but if he was wrong, and if the Fleet required all this renovation, while the noble Lord was declaring it to be perfect and the best ever seen, then the noble Lord and the naval advisers are not fit to be entrusted with the care of the Fleet, or of the money which the Committee is called upon to vote. The hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone is a great authority on these subjects, and he always speaks with frankness. On January 26, 1888, he said—

> "If any mercantile concern were to be managed as the Army and Navy are it would be bankrupt in two years."

Yet the Navy is managed in exactly the same way now. Then on March 12, 1888, the noble and gallant Member said—

> "I have not asked for extravagant outlay. All I have asked for is that the Administration of the Admiralty should be conducted on business principles."

And nothing has yet been done to institute those principles. Then, on January 4, 1889, the noble Lord said—

> "I shall oppose any increase of the Navy unless the people are taken into confidence and told why the Government are going to spend this money."

The Government have not given the information. On March 2, the noble Lord said in the House that—

> "He was sorry to say that the First Lord had not brought forward any clear and definite reasons for what was proposed by the Government."

Therefore, on every ground of common sense, common justice, and fair play, I call upon the noble Lord to vote against the proposals. I think I have proved to the satisfaction of all sensible men that no reason has been given for this expenditure. I have proved that the Gentlemen on the Front Bench who represent the Admiralty are not to be trusted, and that they make statements not from a desire to mislead, but in absolute ignorance of the subject. The proposition before the Committee is one intended to perpetuate international hatred and bad feeling. It is a simple game of brag; and what statesmanship is there in it? Mr. Disraeli, the greatest Leader the Tory Party ever had, or I think ever will have, said in July of 1861—

> "What is the use of diplomacy? What is the use of Government? What is the use of cordial understandings if such things can go on?"

And yet, 30 years after those words have been spoken, we are going on in the same military spirit. I wish I could persuade right hon. Gentlemen on the front Opposition Bench to vote against these proposals. Do they think it is a good thing to go before great caucuses at Birmingham and elsewhere and cordially support Resolutions calling for a reduction of expenditure, and then, when the first proposition is made for increasing expenditure, to go over wholesale and vote with the enemy? I do not set myself up as representing the great body of people in the country. I wish I could be sure that I was speaking for the great body of the working men, for then I should know that the end of this hateful system is not far off. I read in the *Times* of to-day:—

> "Mr. Cremer and Mr. Howell have opposed Lord G. Hamilton's Resolution, with Amendments, which, we should hope, the great body of working men of the United Kingdom would reject with indignant contempt."

[*Cheers.*] I do not complain of hon. Members opposite cheering that: the working classes may reject it with indignant contempt; but I should be a coward and a traitor if, to win the applause of the working men, I were to betray their real interest. The working men have the power in their own hands, and I am disappointed with them, for they fill the House with generals, colonels, and admirals. And when the troops return to England after stealing some country, the working men shout and halloo in the streets. I do not think that it will be always so. Mr. Cobden long ago said, "The time is not yet, though it will come, when people will be able to bear the blessings of prosperity and liberty with peace." The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that those were Quixotic and Utopian views. These are two favourite expressions of the right hon. Gentleman, and Mr. Ruskin has said that they are the two pet words of the Devil. Nothing is, or can be, Utopian that is right. No other plan but that of force has been tried; then let the Government ask the other nations groaning under the weight of military systems if they will not meet and sensibly and calmly discuss the reduction of their mighty armaments. Until such an attempt has been made the Representatives of the people will not be justified in allowing an increase of the burdens of taxation by supporting a scheme for which no reasons have been given, and which must have the effect of fanning the embers of international hostility, and which will delay the coming of that day for which you speak and pray, which none of you believe in, but which will come in spite of you all, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and study war no more.

*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The effect of the hon. Baronet's speech was a little marred by the fact that we have often heard it before.

SIR W. LAWSON: And you will hear it again.

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Ever since I have been in the House, the hon. Baronet has opposed every proposal for increasing the strength of the Army or Navy, and therefore the hon. Baronet was not frank in saying that one of his reasons for opposing the present proposal was that he had no confidence in the existing Admiralty Administration. The hon. Baronet is of opinion that there is great folly in the saying that "If you wish for peace you should be prepared for war." Now, Sir, the only serious war in which this country has been involved of late years was the Crimean War, and if then the country's armaments had been stronger, and if more decision had been shown in their movements, Great Britain would never have become involved in that war. It was the false impression created in the mind of a Foreign Minister as to the power of this country and the resolution of the then Government which was the cause of that lamentable war. The hon. Baronet in common with other speakers assumes that there is an irreconcilable inconsistency between the proposal now made and my past utterances as First Lord of the Admiralty. I am flattered by the microscopic attention which hon. Gentlemen opposite have paid to my speeches; but they have only read sentences without their context, and have therefore put into my mouth statements which I have never made. What I have said in the past I repeat. I have asserted that in my belief Great Britain's fighting power is undoubtedly superior to that of any other nation. I asserted two years ago, and I repeat that assertion now, that for a number of years there can be an increase of efficiency and a decrease of expenditure. And I further asserted that not only I, but the Naval Lords with whom I was associated, were satisfied with the progress which was being made; and that Great Britain's progress, both actually and relatively, as compared with that of other nations in the past three years, was satisfactory. And I added that, in the judgment of the Government, we had not yet arrived at the standard of strength at which our naval establishment ought to be maintained. I made a mistake on two points which I afterwards corrected, but I claim that there is the strictest sequence and consistency in the course which the Government took in the past and in the course which they propose to take now. The Navy Estimates contain a mass of involved and complicated figures, and I do not wonder that hon. Members are sometimes misled, for there appears to be an assumption that we can exactly regulate the expenditure and that the output or result of that expenditure can be exactly proportioned to the amount of money that is spent. That is a great delusion. The result of expenditure varies greatly year by year in regard to the amount of expenditure associated with a particular year. Then there is a practice in the House which is very misleading—namely, to compare the expenditure of one year with the next year, and to assume, if there is a difference, that the Minister who is responsible has made some arbitrary reductions. Nothing of the kind has occurred. What has happened is that payments have been made sooner than anticipated and the country have had the benefit of those payments. The present Admiralty Administration have had two parts of a very difficult character to perform. We came into office in 1885, and have had to deal with a programme for the initiation of which we were not responsible. Our business was to give effect to it as economically and as rapidly as we could, and we have completed it in a much shorter period than we anticipated. The expenditure connected with the work during the period which has elapsed since then has been very much larger in the first three years than we anticipated; but increased strength has been obtained subsequently to that date. Thus it has been possible to associate an increase of efficiency with a reduction of expenditure. I have not made a single solitary reduction which affects the efficiency of the Fleet. In ships, men, and guns we are stronger now than we have been for the last 30 years. The following figures will be the best indication of our past and present policy. One fact brought home to our minds in 1885 was that whether our programme of shipbuilding is large or small, we must take care to have sufficient money to carry it out economically. There can be no greater waste of money than to have a programme for which we have not the courage to take sufficient money. I will take the money voted for new construction for four years, commencing in 1881-2 and ending in 1884-5. In 1881-2 the amount voted was £1,680,000; in 1882-3, £1,770,000; in 1883-4, £1,930,000; and in 1884-5, £2,242,000, an increase over the first year of upwards of £500,000. Any Member looking at these figures will say that the increase of expenditure must carry with it a continuous increase of output or result. The facts are these. In the first year, when the expenditure was lowest, 14 ships, with a displacement of 41,000 tons, were added to the Navy. In the second year the expenditure was higher, and the output went down to 11 ships with 27,000 tons displacement. The next year the expenditure was higher; but the output went down to five ships, with a displacement of only 10,000 tons. The year afterwards the expenditure went up, and there were ten ships, with 10,000 tons displacement. There can be only one possible explanation of these figures. Sufficient money in those years was not taken to complete the ships.

Mr. HOWELL: Will the First Lord tell us how many of these ships remained unfinished?

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I am only dealing with the ships which were finished.

Mr. HOWELL: What others remained unfinished?

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: That is exactly the point I am addressing myself to. The total number of ships finished during that period was only 40, with an aggregate displacement of 90,000 tons, so that the average for those four years was only 10 ships, representing 22,000 tons displacement. Now I come to the period for which I am more or less personally responsible. In 1885-6 the expenditure amounted to £3,750,000. In the next year the figures fell to £3,500,000. The year afterwards—the first in which I was responsible—the amount was £2,800,000. In the next year the estimated amount was £2,700,000, and for the year 1889-90 it is estimated at £2,600,000. In that period the apparent decrease in the Vote for new construction is something like £1,000,000. In the first year 17 ships, with an aggregate displacement of 55,000 tons, were finished. In the second year 14 ships, representing 55,000 tons displacement, were finished;

in the third year there were 30 ships finished, representing 86,000 tons displacement; and this year we estimate that 32 ships will be finished, representing 77,000 tons displacement; while, in addition, there is the Australian Squadron of 14,000 tons, making an aggregate displacement of 91,000 tons. During this period the average addition of each year to the Navy has been 20 ships, representing 62,000 tons, or three times as much as in the preceding period. This great increase is mainly due to our concentrating our attention on the work we had in hand, and finishing it as rapidly as we could. In each single year our output had been more than double that of any foreign nation. But the very rapidity of our procedure has exhausted the number of ships which we had in hand, and consequently, on the 1st March, 1890, we shall only have four ships incomplete. We propose, therefore, during the next four years to make such arrangements as will increase the proportion of strength by which the Navy has been augmented during the last four years. If the House will assent to our proposal we shall, in the next four years, be able to add annually to the Navy an average of 18 ships, representing an aggregate displacement of 88,000 tons—or one-fourth more than during the past year. Therefore the Committee will see that the statement which I made in the past and which year by year I have repeated, that we are able to associate an increase of strength with a decrease of expenditure, is literally true; and it can be accounted for by the simple fact that we have had a great mass of work incomplete in our hands which it was our duty to finish as rapidly as possible. I have not the slightest doubt that the course of action and the policy we propose to pursue is, from a business point of view, the right policy. So far as my statements in the past are concerned, and the proposals we now make for the future, we have shown that they are consistent. [*Opposition cries of* "No."] Certain hon. Gentlemen do not want me to be consistent; but I think I have shown how we have been able to have an increased strength and a decreased expenditure. Such being the result of our past expenditure, I think it is only right we should explain shortly and clearly to the Committee what is the principle upon which our new scheme is based. I thought I had done so fully in my previous statement; but if I have failed I will repeat it. We determined that our new shipbuilding programme should be based upon the fully-ascertained requirements of the nation. It is an easy thing to say to the experts, "Tell us what the requirements of the nation are;" but unless the experts know what is the basis upon which they are to calculate the requirements of the nation, they cannot arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. Therefore Her Majesty's Government directed my advisers to prepare a scheme which should make our naval establishment in 1894 equal to the naval establishments of any two nations. That is the basis of the scheme which we lay before Parliament. We took the old standard which preceding Governments have set before themselves and have not acted up to. Taking the number of ships, which in the opinion of advisers in whose judgment we have confidence, it is necessary to add to the strength of the Navy, we converted that force, including stores, armaments, and munitions of war, into money, and that gave as the number of ships 70, and an expenditure of £21,500,000. We fixed the ordinary Estimates at what we considered would be the normal expenditure—we put that at a very high level, and absorbed as much of the £21,500,000 as we could, the remainder being provided by methods which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has explained. The great advantage in our judgment of these proposals is that for the first time the House of Commons has laid before it a scheme in which the annual expenditure is kept at a normal level, while that which is additional is kept outside. When our shipbuilding proposals are completed, if the House or the country think that the standard of strength is not sufficient, they can go over the same process again, and they will know that the sums spent outside the normal Estimates increase our standard of strength without coming under the head of depreciation and waste.

MR. DUFF: Will the noble Lord say what the normal expenditure is?

*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON: The Estimates of this year. Then we associate this expenditure with a procedure for rapidly giving effect to it, and we lay the whole scheme in its entirety before the House of Commons. It seems to me that we have for the first time laid before Parliament what, in the opinion of competent judges, is the standard of strength at which the Navy ought to be maintained, and associated with the standard of strength is the normal sum necessary to maintain the naval establishments at that strength. The right hon. Member for Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) objected to these proposals being embodied in a Bill, and he made use of the expression that it will give the House of Lords co-equal authority with the House of Commons over the annual Estimates. It is not in the power of this or of any other Government to take away from the House of Commons its inherent power to deal with the Annual Estimates presented to it. The House of Lords will have no authority over these Votes, and it is not proposed by this Bill to take away the power which is inherent in the House of Commons. But our proposals have this great advantage, that any Government that comes in can only throw overboard the proposals after a public exposition of their policy.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: And with the consent of the House of Lords?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: No. I do not want to anticipate the argument on the constitutional question, but if the right hon. Gentleman means to assert that an Act of Parliament under which certain sums are annually voted by the House of Commons gives the House of Lords a mandate to send down and demand the money, he very much misrepresents the Constitutional aspect of the matter. As the discussion of this Constitutional point proceeds, the fact will be found to be that we are not interfering with the action of the House of Commons nor tying its hands, but that this is only a self-denying ordinance putting a proper restraint on the Executive Government of the day. Now the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord Charles Beresford) seems to think that we have appropriated the scheme which he initiated in December last, but at the end of his speech my noble Friend pointed out that there is no relation between this scheme and his. I have never entertained the views which my noble Friend holds and to which he gave expression in December last. If I had thought we were agreed with my noble Friend it would have been my duty to have made proposals of far greater magnitude to the House, but I adhere to what I then said. Sir A. Hood adheres to the statement he made, and considers that in future we must regulate our expenditure by the number of ships foreign nations have in hand, modified by any experience which time may add to the knowledge of the Admiralty. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green seems to be of opinion that the Dockyard administration should be reformed before any additional money is voted, and he took the most unfair methods that could be conceived of showing that Dockyard reform is necessary. He took reports of four or five years back and pointed to certain abuses, but he did not take the trouble to find out whether those Reports have been acted upon and the abuses stopped. If he had done so he would have found that a Committee last year reported most favourably upon the Dockyard Administration of the present Board, and pointed out that very great changes and alterations for the better had taken place. There is very little doubt that year by year the system of Dockyard Administration will continue to improve. If hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway on the other side of the House are sincere in their desire for Dockyard reform, I will tell them how they may show it and assist the Admiralty. Every reform we have made in the Administration of the Dockyards has been persistently misrepresented by the local Representatives of the political Party to which the hon. Member belongs. On every occasion on which reforms have occurred attempts have been made by the Party to which the hon. Member belongs to make political capital out of them.

Mr. HOWELL: They have not found expression in this House.

Sir J. PULESTON: Yes, they have.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: I do not know whether the hon. Member considers the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) a Member of this House and of his political Party. If he does he will find that on every single change of any sort in Devonport Dockyard I have been catechized by the hon. Member for Camborne, and the local Representatives of the Party to which the hon. Member belongs have used every means in their power to make political capital out of it. If hon. Members are in favour of economy, they would show their sincerity by stopping the persistent and improper action of the political agents of the Party with which they are associated in making capital out of the reforms made.

*Mr. HOWELL: It has not found expression in the House. Does the noble Lord expect us to go down to the constituencies and lecture the people?

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: It has found expression certainly on the part of one Member of the House. If the hon. Member will take the trouble to read the newspapers which support hon. Gentlemen opposite, he will see that every opportunity has been taken by them to attack and misrepresent everything which the Admiralty have done. If hon. Gentlemen are really anxious to promote order in the Dockyards they can do so in a more effectual way than by attacking the only Administration which has tried seriously to reform the Dockyards. The Committee have heard a good deal about the question of design, and I would like to say a word or two upon it, though I do not think this House a well-qualified body to discuss so technical a subject. I certainly would not have originated any discussion upon the designs of battleships, but a certain Member of the House has been very active with his pen during the past three or four months, and has used some remarkably strong language outside the House, which, if employed at all ought to have been used inside the House. The hon. Member for Cardiff has been good enough to assert in several letters that the Naval Lords and Naval Officers whom the First Lord of the Admiralty asked to consider these designs, did not understand what they were about, and that they had assented to the design of ships which, in the opinion of the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed) the Admiralty must know it would be an atrocity to send a body of men to battle in. Now, I should not object particularly to any attack made upon myself and the Board of Admiralty for all those who have been First Lords of the Admiralty have undergone much the same class of attack, and know exactly the amount of value to attach to it. But as the hon. Member has attacked a number of Naval Officers, and as I believe this is the first time an endeavour has been made to give effect to the principle that Naval men should be asked to consider Naval designs, and as the hon. Member wishes to impugn the decision arrived at, I would like to inquire how far the hon. Member is a reliable and competent authority. I am not going into any of the past exploits of the hon. Gentleman or into ancient history; the only witness I will call is the hon. Gentleman himself, and I will ask the Committee to listen for a few moments to a statement of facts and to draw their own conclusions from that statement. The hon. Member has over and over again asserted in this House that he is actuated by high patriotic motives in endeavouring to prevent the repetition of a certain class of ship known as the *Admiral* type, ships which the hon. Member characterized as "shameful ships," and which he said would be a source of terror rather to the men in them than to the men against whom they were sent. The hon. Gentleman spoke of those ships as "shameful ships" because they had in his opinion insufficient vertical armour, and because they embodied the absurd principle of carrying armour inside instead of outside. The hon. Gentleman wrote a letter which appeared in the *Times* of January 17, and in it he brought a very grave charge against the Board of Admiralty, of which I am the head. In that letter he said:—

> "In the *Times* of December 27, 1884, there appeared an account of a very extraordinary cruising ship which the late Sir W. Pearce proposed to build at Fairfield for our Navy. The leading idea of this ship was that of very great speed, and accordingly Sir W. Pearce proposed a protective-deck ship of 8,000 tons, 18,000 indicated horse-power, and 21½ knots speed. This design was not adopted at the time nor when the present Tory Government came into power. Between three and four years were allowed to elapse, all the plans of the ship having been in the possession of the Admiralty and nothing done. Lately, however, the present Government have decided to build two such ships just of this description, but have altered the tonnage, horse-power, and speed just enough to enable them to claim credit for the design (only half a knot increase of speed) and have put them forward as designed at the Admiralty, and are building both in the Government dockyards."

The hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "That in common decency and honesty both these ships ought to have been built at Fairfield, where, beyond a doubt, they were originated; and yet it is this Government and this Admiralty, that have robbed Govan of this work, and of the merit of initiating it, that now ask the people of Govan to approve their acts and send a man to Parliament to help them to pursue their dishonest courses."

The Chief Constructor wrote a very polite letter to the *Times* pointing out that the hon. Gentleman was completely wrong, but the hon. Gentleman repeated his charge in a second letter, in which he said—

> "The Admiralty officials came out with a design a trifle longer, a trifle more horse power and speed than the design of Sir W. Pearce, sufficiently altered in detail to enable them to place it before the world as something new. All I can say is that I regard such a proceeding as in the last degree shameless, and those who authorized it must bear the deep discredit of it."

Well, I wrote to the *Times* to say that there was not a word of truth in the hon. Gentleman's charge, but the hon. Gentleman again repeated it, and said in reply—

> "That the *Blake* and the *Blenheim* design now claimed as an Admiralty production exactly corresponds to this description and differs from Sir William Pearce's design only in secondary respects."

Then Sir A. Hood, the senior Naval Lord, wrote again to say there was not a word of truth in the statement. Then the hon. Member wrote again——

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion is very interesting, and apparently very exciting, but I do not quite see how this controversy on the design of certain ships bears on the question before the Committee.

*Lord G. HAMILTON: If I may be permitted to make two observations the bearing of these remarks upon the question before us will at once be seen. The hon. Member has referred to the design of these ships as shameful, and he has four times in writing made a certain statement, to the effect that the Admiralty has in the most shameless manner deliberately appropriated designs by Sir William Pearce, those designs only differing in small secondary details from those by Sir W. Pearce. Now, I had those two designs most carefully examined by my naval and technical experts, and they found that there was not the remotest resemblance between the Admiralty designs and those by Sir W. Pearce; but Sir W. Pearce's designs were an almost exact reproduction of the "shameful" designs of the *Admiral* class.

Sir E. REED: These were for a cruiser.

*Lord G. HAMILTON: Oh! but, says the hon. Gentleman, those were designed for a cruiser. So that the contention of the hon. Gentleman comes to this—that that which is a good design for a cruiser becomes "shameful" for a battleship. Now, the history of this cruiser is as follows. The *Benbow*, a vessel of the *Admiral* type, was put out to contract. Sir W. Pearce had the designs and specifications of the vessel, and his draughtsman, perfectly legitimately, altered the designs in certain particulars, taking the whole armour off the outside and putting it on the inside, and that is the valuable design which the hon.

Member four times deliberately stated has been shamelessly appropriated by the Admiralty.

Lord RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Is it possible for us to see the designs?

***Lord G. HAMILTON**: There is nothing I should like better than to put models in the tea-room or elsewhere, so that hon. Gentlemen might compare them, and test what reliance can be placed on the accusations of the hon. Member for Cardiff. There is no more resemblance between the two than between Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. If anyone aspiring to have knowledge of architecture were to write four times to a newspaper, and say Sir Christopher Wren had been guilty of appropriating the design of Westminster Abbey in the building of St. Paul's, altering the design in secondary details, it would be about on a par with the statement of the hon. Member. Four times has he made the charge, and four times has it been denied, and, I may ask, does he come within the category of a creditable witness? In various matters, beam, displacement, weight, &c., I could show there is no such resemblance. I have made these observations because I think the hon. Gentleman has no right to attack naval officers who were called upon to decide those designs in the manner the hon. Gentleman has done. If the House is of opinion that naval experts should be called in to advise the Government, and if they are unanimous in the opinion they come to, then the House ought not, on the *ipse dixit* of any one Member, however eminent, to cast aside their recommendation, otherwise there is no advantage in the Government of the day endeavouring to get the best advice by calling in technical and naval experts. These designs have now for some time been before the public and the Navy, and I can only say that, with the single exception of the hon. Member for Cardiff, there has not been anybody connected with the Navy who has not given the highest possible approval of them, and the language which in almost every communication I have received is that they constitute a most distinct advance in naval architecture over anything now built or building. I venture to make these observations because I do not think it right that any man should be constantly taking such liberties with the professional and personal characters of those from whom he differs, and I leave the Committee to judge of what reliance should be placed upon the statements of the hon. Member. I hope the Committee will allow this Resolution to be taken to-night. It is not the practice of the House to discuss Bills on the First Reading. This Resolution is practically the first reading of a Bill, only, being a Money Bill, it has to go through this formal process. If the Resolution is assented to to-night we propose to take the Report on Thursday, and then on the Second Reading of the Bill and in Committee hon. Gentlemen will have ample opportunity for discussing the principle as well as the details of the proposals of the Government.

***Sir E. J. REED** (Cardiff): I can assure the Committee it is with extreme reluctance I interpose, having knowledge of the fact that many Members desire to speak, and I have already spoken; but I am sure after what has been said by the noble Lord, the Committee will feel a remark or two is due from me. I am sorry that the First Lord of the Admiralty has completely misconceived my remarks about these ships in supposing that I have attacked in any way, or that I desire to attack, the gallant officers to whom he referred. The noble Lord has rested his accusation in that respect on the statement that I believed they did not understand the designs. Why did I say that? I said that because I was certain that the First Lord of the Admiralty himself did not understand them. The First Lord distinctly stated to the House in his opening speech that these ships, in respect of distribution of armour, more resembled the *Nile* and *Trafalgar* type of ships than the vessels of the *Admiral* class. But what are the facts? When on a later day I asked the noble Lord to inform the House whether the armour of those ships resembled the *Dreadnought* type in rising to a height of 10 ft. or 11 ft. above the water, or whether it resembled the *Admiral* class in rising to a height of 2 ft. or 3 ft., he explained that, while the *Nile* and *Trafalgar*, overloaded as they are for some cause not properly explained, but about which I shall have to put a question later on, have a height of armour rising 10 ft. above the water, these ships as designed have a height of armour rising only 3 ft. This answer sweeps away the idea that these vessels are of the *Nile* and *Trafalgar* type as regards their defence, and confirms the opinion I have formed that they resemble the *Admiral* type. You, Mr. Courtney, have ruled out of order references to the imitation of Sir W. Pearce's design, and although the noble Lord did not closely and immediately accept your ruling, I shall endeavour not to infringe upon it; but I may be allowed to say this. When the belted cruisers were being ordered several years ago, I entreated the Admiralty of that day in the House and in the Press to make those ships over 20 knots of speed. They refused to do so, and built the vessels of a much lower rate of speed. Later on Sir W. Pearce submitted a design for a belted cruiser having 20 knots of speed, but that design was rejected. True, Sir W. Pearce adopted the features of the *Admiral* type, because, like many other designers who were contractors, he desired to meet the wishes, the prejudices, and sometimes even the fallacies and errors of the Admiralty, in order to satisfy them by obtaining the introduction of their own ideas. But the introduction of the *Admiral* type in this cruiser has nothing whatever to do with this question. Sir W. Pearce prepared a design for a fast cruiser three years before the Admiralty adopted it. They aftewords did so, but when the Admiralty adopted the design they produced a vessel differing slightly in the principles mentioned, and I know as well as the First Lord of the Admiralty that that design did not resemble the *Blake* and the *Blenheim* in the matter of protection and of armament. That is not my point—my point is that the type of high-speed cruiser, which had been rejected when Sir W. Pearce proposed it, was adopted years afterwards by the Admiralty without the slightest acknowledgment. But I will not trespass on the time of the Committee. I have heard tonight speeches that have interested me exceedingly, but I heard with profound regret the statements of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone. There is no difference between myself and other naval men as to the *Admiral* class; the only distinction about that class is this—that I condemned those ships before the public money was spent upon them, while naval men condemned them afterwards. I listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Hull, moderate and thoughtful and worthy of all consideration, though not agreeing with all my views, and I may say this—that I doubt whether the hon. Member—I doubt whether the Naval Lords of the Admiralty and their naval referees—I doubt even whether the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone understands thoroughly the meaning of the changes in the designing of ships. Twenty-five years ago it was thought necessary to give to every battle-ship a depth of armour of from 6 ft. to 6½ ft. below and 7 ft. or 8 ft. above water, and this with ships of small dimensions; now the Admiralty are proposing to build ships 75 ft. in width, with a narrow belt of armour 8½ ft. wide, of which 5½ ft. were to be below the water and 3 ft. above. The hon. and gallant Member for East Hull tells us we ought not to complain of this, because, as soon as the top of the armour is under water on one side, the bottom of it is out on the other. The noble and gallant Lord the Member for Marylebone considered it matter for congratulation that the size of the armoured part—he called it the target—was reduced in those ships.

Lord C. BERESFORD: So it is.

*Sir E. J. REED: The noble Lord means that the size of the ship is reduced. On the contrary, it is much increased, and, besides this, you take a great deal of the armour off the side of this large ship and contract the armour belt down to such an extent as to leave a greatly increased part open to the attacks of the enemies' guns. This is called reducing the target! So it is, but I wonder it did not occur to the noble Lord that if all the armour were taken off the target would be still more reduced. The First Lord has made an attack upon me full of bitterness and measured accusation; he has tried to minimize and bring down to a definite fractional proportion the amount of truth which was contained in my statements. No antagonism of that kind, no imputation will ever debar me from opposing this monstrous absurdity of contracting the armour of Her Majesty's line-of-battleships to the extent proposed. I do not expect half-a-dozen Gentlemen would now go into the Lobby with me, but I will ask them to remember the warning I give when, three or four years hence, if these ships are built according to the designs, we have to add largely to the expenditure upon them. But I heartily wish that men in the position of the First Lord would give over this petty personal antagonism. I will say this—that I received only last year an intimation from a former First Lord that some independent tribunal ought to be set up for the purpose of investigating the accusations I had brought against the *Admiral* class. I intimated that the only tribunal I would set up was the former First Lord himself, but he did not seem to think that a sufficiently independent tribunal. This question, I say, ought not to be dealt with as it is. The noble Lord was asked last year to take outside opinion on the question, but what outside opinion has he taken? The only thing he has done has been to call in a number of naval officers, and he leaves us entirely in the dark as to how far he has consulted them on this vital point. I do not wish to be consulted. I feel quite satisfied with my *rôle* of critic; but when we propose to spend millions of money—a million a ship is the point now reached—it is almost an outrage to expend it upon designs concerning which it is possible for a man to rise in his place in this House, and on his reputation denounce them as I have denounced them to-night.

*MR. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I do not propose to detain the Committee more than a few moments in saying a word or two on this most important Resolution. There are a great many Members on this side of the House who are very much inclined to support the Government, because they do not feel able to take the responsibility of refusing to add to the efficiency of the Navy when Her Majesty's Government, in the exercise of their responsibility, come down and ask them to vote a certain sum of money. But still many of us do desire to know two things—we desire to know exactly how much money the Government propose to spend, and, with the noble Lord opposite (Lord C. Beresford), we wish to know whether it is to be spent on some definite plan, or merely because they think something ought to be done? I listened attentively to the speeches of the Secretary to the Admiralty and the First Lord of the Admiralty, and I am sorry to say I do not think that either of those speeches threw very much light on these two questions. The First Lord of the Admiralty did not give us the facts and figures on which he based his estimate as to the wants of the Navy, but merely stated that he based his demand on the ground that the British Navy should be brought up to the strength of the Navies of any two continental countries put together. He did not state that he and his advisers had gone carefully into the question of what the Britsh Navy had to do—and that is the real point—but he mapped out a plan on the basis to which I refer. He seemed to think that if on paper he could make the British Navy equal to those of any other two nations he would have done his duty. In regard to the amount we are asked to spend in increasing the Navy, I, for one, find it very hard to discover how much it is that the Government require. So far as I can gather, the speeches of Ministers—the First Lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary to the Admiralty—all seem to differ as to the amount which will be actually required from the nation for the increase of the Navy, and it is very hard indeed for those of us who desire to give them support in this matter, to know what course to take, when the Government themselves seem to be so very uncertain in their minds in regard to the amount of money they require, and so very uncertain as to what exactly they want it for. I listened with great interest to the very honest and straightforward speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Cremer) the other evening, but I must say I do not think that any of my hon. Friends below the Gangway who object to the proposals of the Government sufficiently appreciate the great extension which has taken place, on the one hand, in our commerce and responsibilities, and hence in our vulnerability, and, on the other, in the expenditure of other nations on their Navies. I believe I speak for many others on this side of the House besides myself when I say that we are just as anxious as hon. Members opposite to defend our Empire and our commerce, but we protest against what we consider to be an unconstitutional way of voting this money. We believe that nothing will tend more to extravagance and bad finance than a proposal of this kind. We desire that every consecutive Minister shall have a free hand in this naval expenditure; and while I, for one, am anxious to support Her Majesty's Government in their proposal to strengthen the Fleet, I protest most emphatically against this unconstitutional proposal in reference to their statutory programme.

*Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I hope the House will not be led aside by official ingenuity into a technical discussion, or permit its judgment to be confused by a crowd of figures, which perhaps the First Lord of the Admiralty may understand—though, as to that, I am somewhat sceptical—but which certainly he has failed to make intelligible in this quarter of the House. These proposals must be considered on broad grounds — upon grounds which can be made intelligible to the taxpayer of ordinary intelligence — and if we find the front benches in agreement, that is a reason why every private Member should look at the question with redoubled vigilance, and even with suspicion. The hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean) challenged the Government, and challenged the noble Lord in particular, to set forth the reasons why we are asked now to embark on this large expenditure. I will ask all candid Members of this House whether the First Lord of the Admiralty has fairly met that question? What did he tell us? He told us that in ships, men, and guns, we are stronger than we have been at any time during the past 30 years. Well, that is a reason why we should be content with our present progress in regard to shipbuilding, rather than embark on a programme that involves the laying down of no fewer than 40 additional ships in one year. But it seems to me that the Secretary to the Treasury, to whom the same challenge was addressed, was more frank than the noble Lord, and he intimated that these changes had been decided upon as the result of the Naval Manœuvres. If that is so, we have a right to demand that the Report on the Naval Manœuvres be submitted to us in its entirety? What have we got? We have got only mutilated extracts of that Report, and shall I be seriously told that the public interests require that the material parts of this Report shall be suppressed? Suppressed! Why, every word of it has for months been known to every European Cabinet which is at all interested in the information. No; it is not the public interest which requires the suppression of that Report, but it is the interest of the Government, because if that Report were published to the world, I venture to say that it would seal the condemnation of the Admiralty. If however, the Report were edited at all there is one discreditable paragraph which should have been left out—I refer to that which suggests that in the event of this country being involved in a maritime war we should repudiate the Declaration of Paris. That is discreditable, and as impolitic as discreditable; because, whilst the Declaration of Paris is founded on reason and humanity, it is not less founded on the best interests of this country. Instead of repudiating the Declaration of Paris, the Government ought to be anxious to extend its operation. It would be greatly to the interest of this and other countries to exempt all private property from capture in time of war. Therefore, I think it would be good policy if, backed up by the United States, Her Majesty's Government approached Continental nations on the subject. We have heard a great deal about the necessity of protecting our commerce, but before you can fix the strength of our Navy you must be agreed upon the duties which that Navy has to discharge. Upon that essential preliminary the authorities at the Admiralty are hopelessly divided; but I do not think that we, in this country, are weak in ships relatively to other European Powers. If we are weak at all, we are weak in guns, owing to our having hesitated so long before adopting the breech-loading system. We are now asked to repeat the fatal mistake we made in the matter of guns. We are asked to build next year no fewer than 40 ships—an enormous order as compared with Lord Northbrook's programme—and it will be necessary to supply guns for these vessels. The science of gunnery is in a state of flux, and you are going exactly to repeat the mistake you made up to 1880, by manufacturing in large quantities a type of gun which probably in a few years will be as obsolete as our muzzle-loaders are now. I desire to ask whether the present administration of the Admiralty is such as would justify you in commencing an expenditure as large as that which is now proposed to this Committee? I have gone very carefully through the Blue Book to which my hon. Colleague referred, and I think I am right in saying that there is not a single topic in which Mr. Elgar, who is the Director of the Dockyards, agrees with Mr. White, who is the Director of Naval Construction, and yet, although there is this disagreement between these two officers, the connection between the two Departments is so intimate, that Mr. White said himself that it was extremely difficult to say where the duty of one Department began and the duty of the other ended. Under these circumstances, is it surprising that the Admiralty at present is turning out *fiascoes* of naval construction, which, as the hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed) has shown, can neither be trusted to steam a-head, to fight, or to run away? According to the evidence of Mr. Elgar, the supervision of our shipbuilding is placed with a class of officers who cannot be trusted to build ships either economically or efficiently. I hope that before voting this money hon. Members will read the Appropriation Account of the Navy issued a few days ago. It is a duty hon. Members owe to their constituents to read that Account. They will find from it that the Admiralty again and again has incurred the severest censure of the Controller and Auditor General, and that the Admiralty has repeatedly been guilty of gross misapplication of public money.

It being midnight, the Chairman interrupted the business.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Question be now put."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

Mr. PICTON (Leicester, seated, and with his hat on): As a matter of Order, I beg to call your attention to the fact that you had risen and called "Order" before the Closure was moved.

The CHAIRMAN: It marked an interruption of the business at which the Closure might be moved.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 235; Noes 117.—(Div. List, No. 53.)

Question put accordingly, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The Committee divided:—Ayes 256; Noes 85.—(Div. List, No. 54.)

*Mr. W. H. SMITH claimed, "That the Main Question be now put."

Main Question put accordingly.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 251; Noes 75.—(Div. List, No. 55.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize (a) the expenditure of a sum not exceeding

£21,500,000, for the purpose of building, arming, equipping, and completing for sea vessels for Her Majesty's Navy; of this expenditure a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in the seven years ending on the 31st day of March, 1896; and a sum not exceeding £11,500,000, to be issued out of moneys provided by Parliament for Naval Services during the five financial years ending on the 31st day of March, 1894.

Whereupon the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Resolution to be reported upon Thursday.

Committee to sit again on Thursday.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when he proposes to take the second Resolution?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The second Resolution must follow the Report of the first Resolution. I came under an engagement to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to take the Report of the first Resolution on Thursday, and I shall adhere to that engagement.

MR. MORLEY: Will it not be a Report of the whole of the Resolutions?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should think the Report of the one Resolution might do.

MR. MORLEY: When will the Report of the second Resolution be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: As soon as it is carried, and on the very first opportunity. The second Resolution is pure machinery, and it has nothing whatever to do with the substance of the matter.

SIR W. LAWSON: Will the Report be the first Order?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It will be brought on in sufficient time to be amply considered.

SIR W. LAWSON: Will it be closured?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Sufficient time will be necessary to bring forward some other measures.

MR. CHILDERS: I do not think that would be at all in accordance with the understanding come to with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. If the right hon. Gentleman is able to take the Report on Thursday, most clearly it ought to be the first Order.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It will be substantially the first Order; but I cannot give any positive engagement to make it the first Order.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

On Clause 2,

MR. CONYBEARE: I move, Sir, that you report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope the hon. Member will not press that Motion. The Bill is one of serious importance to the country; and as it is in continuance of an annual arrangement I trust he will not impede its progress.

MR. CONYBEARE: I have moved that Progress be reported, because I think that Her Majesty's Ministers have got through quite enough business in one night.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again.

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) [SALARY, &c.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize the payment, out of the moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Accountant of Court, who may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend and extend the Law relating to Judicial Factors and others in Scotland, and to unite the office of the Accountant of the Court of Sessions and the Accountant in Bankruptcy in Scotland, and of Salaries to the clerks who may be appointed by him, also the payment of compensation to the holder of the office of Accountant of the Court of Session for the abolition of his office, and of remuneration to such persons as may be employed to audit accounts under the provisions of the said Act.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned. I do so because I read in the papers on Saturday that Mr. Stephens, who has been engaged in levying distraints for tithes in Wales, has come up to London for the express purpose of interviewing the Home Secretary and obtaining the assistance of the Military Forces of the Crown in carrying out those distraints. This, Sir, is an important Constitutional question. We have seen the Forces of the Crown again and again employed by the Government against Her Majesty's subjects, first in England, then in Ireland and Scotland, and now in Wales; and I think it is high time that some assurance of a satisfactory kind should be given by the Government before we give them the control of the Army that this sort of thing shall not continue. In the Preamble of the Bill it is stated that the Army is to be maintained for the defence of the country; but Her Majesty's Government have of late on several occasions employed the Forces of the Crown notoriously and recklessly against ordinary and peaceful citizens. They so employed them in Trafalgar Square on the 13th November, 1887.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order! The remarks of the hon. Gentleman cannot be made on the Army Annual Bill, as they do not relate to that measure.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I hope, Sir, you will allow me to say a word to make my meaning clear. The object of the Bill is to give the Government the control of the Army for another year, and I am endeavouring, subject to your ruling, to point out that on several occasions the Government have made an improper —and as I am prepared to contend—an unconstitutional use of the Forces of the Crown. I am anxious, before we place in the hands of the Government this formidable weapon, to obtain from them some satisfactory assurance that it shall not be recklessly used against the citizens of this country. In moving that the debate be now adjourned, I should be glad to give the Home Secretary an opportunity of making a statement, which I trust may be reasonably satisfactory to the House.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): I beg to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the debate be now adjourned."

Mr. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I am glad to be able to support the Motion, as I have seen that the use made of the Military Forces in this country has of late not been what we have been previously accustomed to. I have had opportunities of seeing the Military Forces used for purposes——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that the question now before the House is restricted to the Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate.

Mr. T. ROWLANDS: Unless the Home Secretary gives a satisfactory answer on the point which has been raised we shall divide the House.

The House divided:—Ayes 31; Noes 110.—(Div. List, No. 56.)

Original Question again proposed,—"That the Bill be now read the third time."

Mr. A. J. WILLIAMS: I rise, Sir, for the purpose of saying——

Mr. W. H. SMITH rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 105; Noes 36.—(Div. List, No. 57.)

Original Question put accordingly, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

The House divided:—Ayes 110; Noes 32.—(Div. List, No. 58.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Mr. CONYBEARE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to call attention to the fact that it is past one o'clock, after which business cannot be taken.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. and learned Member is aware that the remaining business can be taken after twelve o'clock, and it is strictly in accordance with the Rules to dispose of the remaining unopposed business now.

Remaining Orders of the Day deferred.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after One o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 12.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 10.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 2nd April, 1889.

REPRESENTATIVE PEER FOR IRELAND.

Report made from the Lord Chancellor, That the right of Lionel Seymour William Earl of Portarlington to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL. (NO. 35.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1^{a}; to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Thursday next.—(*The Lord Harris.*)

REFORMATORY SCHOOLS BILL. (NO. 36.)

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Acts relating to Reformatory Schools in Great Britain—Was presented by the Earl Brownlow; read 1^{a}; and to be printed.

LARCENY ACT, 1861, AMENDMENT (USE OF FIREARMS) BILL.

(NO. 30.) SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: My Lords, it will probably be within the recollection of most of your Lordships that some six and twenty years ago a terrible epidemic of robbery with violence broke out in the Metropolis, and, to a certain extent, all over the country; persons were seized from behind and throttled, and very serious injury done to them. That was a common and constant occurrence, and no one felt himself quite safe going home in the evening from attacks of this kind, and it was not unusual for even ordinary citizens to go about armed. The offence was called, as your Lordships will remember, from its resemblance to a Spanish mode of execution, garrotting. It was in vain that the learned Judges passed long sentences of penal servitude; nothing seemed effective to put a stop to these crimes. The public on all sides called out for something to be done, but the Home Office, as usual, remained quiescent. Nothing whatever was done by the Home Secretary, at that time Sir George Grey, and from his non-interference in these matters he was supposed to have earned a considerable amount of popularity amongst the criminal classes. I recollect a cartoon in *Punch* at the time, which represented two or three garrotters attacking an old gentleman, and just as they were about to perform their usual operation one of them calls out to the other, "Let him alone, Bill; it is our non-interfering friend, Sir George Grey." My noble Friend on my right (Lord Norton), then Mr. Adderley, a Member of the other House of Parliament, threw himself as it were into the breach. He brought forward a Bill for subjecting persons guilty of robbery with violence to the lash. This measure met with no support from the Home Secretary, nor from the Government of the day; but, backed by the opinion of the country and the good sense of the House of Commons, my noble Friend persevered with his Bill, and eventually it passed into law. That Bill proved a very great success, and but a very short time elapsed after it had been put into effective operation before robbery with violence began considerably to diminish; the miscreants who were so perfectly reckless of the sufferings of others had a very sensible dread of incurring physical pain themselves, and no very long time elapsed before the crime of garrotting faded away and your Lordships will observe that in the sentences now passed by the learned Judges, it is but seldom that they have to have recourse to the punishment of the lash. Therefore, my Lords, what was then only an experiment has now become a proved success. But since that time, and within the last few years, a new form of robbery with violence has arisen which is untouched by the Act of 1863. I mean the custom which the criminal classes have lately adopted of arming themselves with revolvers when about to set out upon their depredations, with a determination to use them remorselessly, either to effect their object, or to enable themselves to escape from capture. I need not now stop to remind your Lordships of the numerous cases which have occurred. I may mention, however, *en passant*, the affair not long since in Mayfair, where a policeman, finding two men about to commit a burglary in the area, was remorselessly shot down by them, and the villains effected their escape. There was a remarkable case the other day at Muswell Hill, where a number of burglars having deliberately armed themselves with revolvers, set out on a marauding expedition, and having pitched upon a house without any notion—as far as we can judge—as to choosing that particular house, they proceeded to rifle it; and when interrupted in their operations they opened a regular fusillade upon the unfortunate inhabitants, which all but ended in the death of one. These are only one or two instances out of many that could be cited. The danger is becoming an imminent one, and the country demands that a stop should be put to it. My Lords, the country appears to be of opinion, judging from the expressions which I have seen in the public Press, and from the numerous presentments which have been forwarded by Grand Juries, that the remedy which proved so effectual in the case of garotting shall be applied to this new danger to which the public are exposed. It may be said that it is not a right thing to inflict torture upon anybody, and no one can be more reluctant than I am to advocate the infliction of anything approaching torture, either upon mankind or dumb animals. But with regard to this particular point I cannot help coinciding with what was well said by M. de Cassagnac when the question of the abolition of capital punishment was raised in the French Chamber. "By all means," said the witty Frenchman, "abolish capital punishment: *mais que Messieurs les assassins commencent.*" As soon as the burglars have ceased to make use of revolvers upon Her Majesty's subjects, and upon unarmed policemen, the necessity for inflicting upon them the lash will cease. The remedy is in their hands, and I do not believe myself that once the Judges are armed with the power it will be very necessary for them to exercise it. My object is not to torture, but to deter. My Lords, in framing this Bill it has been suggested to me by some of my noble Friends that the punishment ought to be extended to all burglars, certainly to those who inflict actual bodily harm in the course of their operations. I do not mean to say that there may not be a great deal to be said, at any rate for the latter part of that suggestion; but this Bill is aimed at a distinct species of crime, and I wish, with your Lordships' permission, to confine it to that. It is aimed against the habitual criminal, who deliberately, and with malice aforethought, arms himself with a revolver, or with some other firearm, determined to make use of it rather than allow himself to be captured, or to be frustrated in his designs; and there is a distinction to be drawn between such a man as that and the criminal who, in the heat of a struggle, inflicts a serious blow upon those who are resisting him. Then I am quite sure that unless something is done to prevent this use of firearms by habitual criminals, the country will be compelled to arm the police with an equally efficient weapon. That is a suggestion which I myself should be sorry to see carried out for many reasons. It would be rather a step backward in civilization, and I am told that the police themselves are not desirous of it. But if burglars are still to be allowed, without incurring any greater punishment, to arm themselves with such weapons, and thereby escape capture, it will be too much to ask an unarmed man, no matter how brave he be, to resist them in their depredations or to effect their capture. Now, my Lords, turning to the Bill which I hold in my hand, it is of an extremely simple character. It is very much after the model of 1863. I propose to enact that whosoever shall be guilty of any crimes mentioned under what are called the housebreaking and burglary clauses of the Larceny Act of 1861, and shall be found when doing so to be in the possession of firearms, shall be liable to the same penalties as those indicated in the Act of my noble Friend, which I have copied verbatim. Those clauses I have placed in the Schedule to this Bill, in order that no one should be ignorant of the penalties that are imposed. If the Bill is passed through both Houses the Schedules may be omitted if it is thought necessary. I also provide that the attempt to commit these felonies shall also render the person attempting them liable to the penalty if he be found armed with firearms. I provide that it shall be immaterial whether the firearm is loaded or unloaded. The reason for that is that there would be no end of difficult questions which might arise on the trial as to whether the firearm was loaded or unloaded. Nothing would be easier for the practised burglar (and that is the man who will be most likely to be armed) to put the ammunition in one pocket and the pistol in the other, so that, in case he was arrested, a technical objection might be taken that the weapon was not loaded at the time. By the second clause I provide that any accomplice present at the commission of the offence, and acting in concert with the person so convicted, shall be liable if he has in his possession any firearms. That is also necessary, because nothing would be easier or more likely than for the man who had used the revolver to pass it to one of his accomplices, and so, when he was arrested, the most guilty of the lot might be found to be without a weapon. Again, they might drop the weapons, and none of them would be found in possession of firearms; but the fact of their being there would, under this clause, render it a question for the jury whether one of them, at any rate, had not been at the time the offence was committed in the possession of firearms. I provide, by the third clause, that nothing in the Act shall authorize any Court of General or Quarter Sessions to order this penalty; but such Court shall continue to exercise its jurisdiction in all cases as if this Act had not been passed. This I put in, not because I have myself any doubt whatever as to whether the Courts of Quarter Sessions in this country would exercise the power righteously and properly and wisely; but I am well aware that there is a strong feeling elsewhere against giving such powers to the unpaid magistrates, and therefore I propose to reserve the power of inflicting this particular punishment to Her Majesty's Judges sitting in the Court of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery. By the 4th clause I provide that the magistrates before whom persons charged will be brought shall commit them to the Assizes, or to the Central Criminal Court, as the case may be, and not to the Sessions. That is not an unreasonable provision, because, in the case of burglary or housebreaking, where one of the parties be found armed with a revolver, it must be an offence of so serious a nature that it really ought not to be dealt with at Quarter Sessions. This is the whole of the Bill. It is one of a simple character. It is one, I believe, urgently demanded by the good sense of the country, and I humbly ask your Lordships to give it a Second Reading.

*Lord NORTON: My Lords, I should like to say a few words in support of a Bill which is an extension of the enactment which I had the good fortune to carry through Parliament about 26 years ago. For 26 years that Act has proved the truth of its principle. The best test of any punishment is its effect in preventing a repetition of the crime, and punishment, to be effective, must be suited to the motives of the criminal. Where fear of bodily pain is the only deterrent from crime, or where a morbid desire for notoriety or a wanton childish love of mischief is the incentive, the best penalty that can be devised is corporal punishment, which in the one case inflicts bodily pain, and in the other case involves disgrace as a counter to the notoriety sought. All those three cases have been illustrated by the results of three Acts recently passed enabling corporal punishment to be inflicted. Garrotting has been stopped by this means. The crime of shooting at the Queen, which used to be the ambition of cracked-brained seekers for notoriety, has been stopped by the threat of corporal punishment; and wanton injury to works of art is an illustration of the third class of cases referred to—that of childish and wanton mischief—has also been stopped by annexing corporal punishment to it. A great deal of nonsense has been advanced against corporal punishment as degrading; but, my Lords, if the motives of a criminal are degraded, the medicine must suit the disease. I think this has been pretty well proved by the experience of these three Acts which I have mentioned. Perhaps the only genuine prejudice against corporal punishment has been caused by the excessive flogging of former times, but to argue from the abuse against the use of anything will surely not have weight with your Lordships. One thing is clear—that the shorter the punishment is for its purpose, and the more immediately connected with the crime, the better it is both for deterrence and for example. *Culpam pœna premit comes* was Horace's compliment to the Government of Augustus, and corporal punishment has the merit of shortness and immediate application. The reasons which make some people prefer long imprisonment are two, both very bad reasons. The one is to get rid of a criminal out of the way for as long as possible. That, I maintain, is an unfit object of punishment. Correction must deal with the criminal, and not merely get him out of sight. A Draconian Code would be the consummation of such a principle of punishment. We got into the way of it by our system of transportation, and the most unfortunate substitution, when transportation was not possible, of penal servitude in parallel long terms of sentence. The other reason advanced in favour of long imprisonment is the hope of reforming and educating criminals in prison. I maintain that there could not be a worse place for reformation of character than a prison. If there is any education in a prison it is in the art of hypocrisy, but as to character being reformed during a long term of imprisonment it is an unlikely and rare occurrence. Sir Edmund Du Cane, the Chief Commissioner of Prisons, in a publication last year, states his experience to be that long terms of imprisonment lose their deterrent effect. This Bill proposes to add whipping of armed burglars to any other punishment. Certainly, the punishment of whipping is the most proper for such reckless violence, and would be the most powerful deterrent, both from repetition and for example. I believe in many cases that whipping would be enough without the additional punishment. I shall beg your Lordships to let me call your attention soon to other crimes of similar brutality which might be brought within the same category. Your Lordships are aware that within a few days you had a Return laid on the Table from the magistracy of a great part of this Kingdom in favour of extending corporal punishment to suitable cases. My only hope now is that your Lordships will unanimously take this step in the course of the improvement of our Criminal Code which is embodied in this Bill.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, I waited to hear whether my noble Friend on the Woolsack, as representing the Government, would express any opinion upon this Bill; but as he has not risen I will make one or two observations upon what has fallen from the noble Lord opposite. Of course, we shall all be thoroughly agreed in our desire to stop the crimes at which this Bill is aimed, and to amend the law, if amended it can be, in any direction suitable and proper with a view to that result. But I cannot help bringing to your Lordships' notice the fact that the arguments in favour of the Bill have been, as I believe, founded very greatly on a misapprehension as to the success of the infliction of the punishment of flogging in putting an end to garrotting. A measure was introduced into the House of Commons some years ago with a view to extending the punishment of flogging to other offences. I think that in that case it was aimed against assaults upon women. I recently moved for a Return showing the number of cases in which offences had been tried where the punishment of flogging could have been inflicted for some time prior to the Act becoming law, and for several years subsequently to the Act becoming law; and those Returns conclusively showed that it was not that Act which put an end to garrotting, or reduced it within narrow limits. It had been reduced within narrow limits before that Act was passed, and it was not reduced into narrower limits after the Act was passed. One of the Returns was a Return showing the number of cases tried, of offences where flogging could be administered, and the number of cases where it was actually administered. As your Lordships may be aware, some Judges freely order the infliction of the punishment, others never make it part of their punishment. Now, on looking at these Returns, it cannot be maintained that the infliction of that punishment was a very potent deterrent against the commission of offences. I would earnestly commend the study of these Returns to your Lordships before this Bill is passed under the supposition that the infliction of corporal punishment has proved a satisfactory deterrent in the cases in which it has been inflicted. Of course, the whole strength of this measure rests upon the assertion that that is likely to be the case. I say, on the contrary, that so far as facts go, and as my experience goes, that is not the case; and it is on that ground that I am not prepared to support this Bill. Now, I will tell your Lordships why I think it has not been the case. One of the main elements in a punishment being deterrent rests in this: that that punishment that you intend to be deterrent shall be a certain one—that is to say, any person committing the offence will have on his mind the conviction at the time that he is likely to suffer that punishment. But if you only leave the infliction of this punishment in the discretion of the Judges, and if you know perfectly well that it will not depend upon the offence, or even upon the gravity of the offence, but upon the particular Judge who happens to try the case, whether the punishment will be inflicted or not—that it will rather more often not be inflicted than inflicted—then, at once, any certainty of that kind absolutely disappears. And, my Lords, we know perfectly well that that will be the case. There are some Judges who are known as flogging Judges (or there have been), and there are some Judges who are perfectly well known to be very much indisposed to order the infliction of that form of punishment; and the result has been, as a matter of fact, that neither giving the Judges power to inflict, nor the actual infliction of it, has, as far as can be ascertained, diminished crime. The noble Lord who seconded this Bill seconded it because he proposes something like a revolution in the matter of our punishment. He proposes that you should extend this practice of flogging much more largely—he takes this as an instalment. He says we are to have shorter sentences and more flogging. Now I confess I have myself very great doubts as to the advisability of such a change. The punishment of flogging, I believe, is the most unequal of punishments. It is punishment which is to some a punishment of extreme and intense severity, whilst to persons who may have been just as guilty as the others it is a punishment of, comparatively speaking, moderate severity. It depends on the character and constitution of the individual who may be punished, and may have very little to do with the aggravation or brutality of the crime. I should be sorry to generalize in any way; but, at all events, it is quite possible that those who are the most guilty will the least feel the kind of punishment which it is proposed by this Bill to inflict. And undoubtedly there is a feeling which would be very much opposed to any large or general extension of this punishment of flogging. As I have said, there are certainly some Judges who have the strongest objection to this form of punishment, and who would be most unwilling to order its infliction; but surely the first essential is to have some evidence before us—and we have none—that the punishment, where it has been adopted, has been effective. I will tell the noble Lord opposite what I believe did put a stop to the immense amount of robbery with violence which was rife some little time before that Act was introduced, and which was, no doubt, the origin of the measure. There were a number of cases of garrotting tried at the Central Criminal Court together. They were all tried by a learned Judge who is now a Member of this House (Lord Bramwell), and he sentenced all the offenders to penal servitude for life. If anyone will study the records of the Central Criminal Court they will find that that was followed by an enormous diminution in the number of offences, and that diminution was not carried any further by the passing of the Act which instituted flogging for that crime. I quite feel that burglars who are found in possession of firearms should be most severely punished—I do not in the least disagree with the noble Lord opposite with regard to that; and I should personally like to see the use or possession of firearms by a person committing offences of this description made of itself punishable, in addition to the punishment which is given for the offence under other circumstances, so as to mark distinctly the view of the law that it is an aggravation of the offence, and that there ought to be some special punishment attached to it. I think, if that were done, it would be much more likely to mark the special character of the offence by securing a special punishment in respect of the use of firearms or the carrying of firearms by persons committing burglary, and it would be much more likely to be effectual, than merely giving power to Judges to order flogging, and leaving it absolutely to their discretion to exercise the power or not, when we know that the discretion would be exercised in a different way by different Judges. On these grounds, although I sympathize entirely with the object of this Bill, I confess I am unable to give my support to it.

THE PREMIER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I only rise because I happened to be in the House of Commons at the time when the Bill was passed to which my noble Friend opposite (Lord Herschell) has referred, and my recollection differs very distinctly from that of the noble Lord. My recollection is that the introduction and passing of that Bill acted like a charm, and that even as soon as it was clear that it would pass there was a very large diminution of these offences. I think the noble Lord's argument is imperfect in this—that he seems to look at the operation of moral causes in the manner in which he would describe a laboratory experiment. He says one Judge did sentence to flogging, and no diminution of crime followed; another Judge did not sentence to flogging, and a diminution followed. That is rather a coarse and material way of looking at the operation of great moral causes such as this. You must look at the thing in large, and looking at it in that way, unless my memory grossly deceives me, that measure was one of the most efficacious measures of the Criminal Law ever passed. Of course, it is perfectly possible that, at the same time, Lord Bramwell interfered with his very just and resolute sentences; but it is almost impossible to disjoin the effect of various causes operating together towards the same end. Perhaps I might be allowed to plead that the very fact of Parliament passing the Act was not without its effect upon that learned Judge's mind.

LORD HERSCHELL: The sentences were pronounced before the Act passed.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Well, I am speaking from memory, but I think the noble Lord is historically wrong in his references to what happened. There was an epidemic of garrotting in November, December, and January, 1862 and 1863, and the measure to which reference has been made was introduced as soon as Parliament met. The noble Lord says that this punishment is unequal. That is perfectly true. I would be very glad if the noble Lord would lay on the Table a list of punishments which are not unequal. I know of none. Even the punishment of death is unequal. There is no punishment which would not hit more hardly upon the man of delicate and refined nature than the man coarsely brought up—hit more hardly upon the man of delicate physical conformation than the man who had a robust constitution. Whatever the punishment is, the pain it inflicts must largely depend upon the nature and the antecedents of the person upon whom it is inflicted; and it is no real objection to make to a punishment, that is otherwise efficacious, that it is unequal. That is one of the necessary defects of human punishment; but it is a defect which has to be ignored in the necessity of putting down crime. But the extent to which this punishment ought to be applied must depend largely upon public opinion at the time. Punishments may be robbed of all their benefit if they go against the moral feeling of the community in which they are inflicted. I do not see what force there is in the argument that my noble Friend asks for this Bill only as an instalment. That is the ordinary attitude of all reformers, and they are often candid enough to say if they get what they ask at first they will carry it further. But in spite of that it has been the practice of Parliament to grant reforms which it had no intention of carrying to the extent which its advocates candidly and confessedly desired. If we applied that principle to my noble Friend's Bill we might accept the Bill without accepting a more extended application of the principle. I believe that the evil with which the Bill proposes to deal is a very great one, and that it is necessary to check this use of firearms which has been quite recently introduced among our people. In Committee any modification of the Bill which is thought desirable can be suggested and any safeguards introduced, or any rule adopted which may amend the caprice of different Judges to which the noble Lord referred; but I believe my noble Friend is right in pointing out what is a very great evil, and that the balance of argument is in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill.

***Earl COWPER**: My Lords, I cannot help thinking that this is rather retrograde legislation. It seems to me that, if we pass this measure, we shall find it difficult not to go further. There is no very great difference, after all, between a burglar who carries a revolver in order that he may shoot a man, and another who carries a knife or a life-preserver which would be equally likely to cause death. I do not think it would be possible to confine the operation of the measure to the use of firearms. It would have to be extended to other deadly weapons if passed at all, and I think it would be retrograde legislation. The feeling in this country is very strong against flogging, except for very disgraceful offences. So strong is it, that, in spite of many arguments which were brought up by experienced officers in the Army as to the absolute necessity of preserving flogging in the Army and Navy, it had to be done away with. After all, what is flogging but inflicting torture; and if you once admit the principle of torture in punishment, you go back to the system which prevailed in the Middle Ages. I think we ought to be very careful in extending the practice of flogging. If we are to have the punishment of flogging at all, it should be limited to some absolutely disgraceful acts, and not simply used as a deterrent. For these reasons, I feel it incumbent to vote against the Bill.

The Earl of CARNARVON: My Lords, as it happens that I myself was partly concerned in the Bill to which allusion has been made, and carried that Bill through your Lordships' House after my noble Friend, then Mr. Adderley, had introduced it into the House of Commons, I should like to say one word upon the subject. There was great opposition at the time to the introduction of this principle of corporal punishment. There is no doubt that at the time of the passing, or about the time of the passing, of that Act, the crime at which the Act was directed fell off. Whether that was *propter hoc* or not I really cannot say. I looked very closely at the time, I remember, into the question which Sir James Mowbray so very warmly disputed—whether or no the falling off of crime was due to the Act, or whether it was due to other causes such as the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) has mentioned. I always indulged the hope that it was due to the Act in which I had had a considerable share; but I think this at least is certain, and will be supported by the general evidence of Judges and Chairmen of Quarter Sessions—that corporal punishment, when discreetly and sparingly adopted, is viewed with very great terror by the criminal classes. It is a punishment which is open, no doubt, to abuse, and singular abuse, if indiscreetly used; but, on the other hand, if exercised with great caution, I think the opinion of everybody concerned with the criminal classes would go to this length at least—that it is viewed with extreme apprehension and terror. One object of this Bill, as I understand—and there, I think, everyone will sympathize with it—is indirectly to restrict the pernicious habit of carrying firearms. That is a question which, of course, is apart from the offence of housebreaking. There is no doubt whatever that of late years the habit of carrying revolvers and pistols amongst the peaceable population of this country has grown up. I think, myself, it is a mischievous habit, and one which it would be well if Parliament did its best to put a stop to. A very simple method of dealing with it, of course, is to impose a licence upon the possession of these weapons, but it is difficult to enforce such a regulation. In foreign countries legislation has been—and, I think, not unjustly—very strict upon the subject; and laws are in existence both in France and in Italy directed, not so much against the possession of these weapons, as against the size and particular make of the very light ones. That is a matter well deserving of the attention of Parliament. It certainly tends to crime, and it engenders a much too facile use of those particular weapons. With regard to this particular Bill, I do not understand why my noble Friend who has introduced it has disqualified Quarter Sessions from dealing with these questions. Quarter Sessions at this moment is perfectly competent to order corporal punishment in cases of robbery, and it does order it, and I can see no reason whatever why that power should be taken from it. The Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, as a rule, are quite as competent, it seems to me, to impose corporal punishment in the case of housebreaking as in the case of robbery. I do not quite follow the meaning of Clause 2, in which it is provided that if a person committing the offence of housebreaking is accompanied by an accomplice, and that accomplice carries a loaded or unloaded gun, not the accomplice, but the principal, is to suffer corporal punishment.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: My noble Friend has misinterpreted the clause.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON: I do not distinctly understand why this penalty should be limited to housebreaking alone. If a robber who attacks a man on the high road has a pistol in his pocket or in his hand, it seems to me that he deserves the sentence of the law in this respect quite as much as a housebreaker, and I do not see the logic of separating the two cases, unless it be, as my noble Friend (Lord Norton) indicated, that this is merely an instalment, and that a much larger measure will follow hereafter.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I thoroughly agree with the object of the measure. The habit has, no doubt, very much increased of late years of this particular class of persons going about armed. This Bill is based entirely on the principle of preventing that habit by the infliction of corporal punishment. The noble Lord (Lord Norton) took the line that corporal punishment had had deterrent effects in the cases in which it had been inflicted, and the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Salisbury) also took that line. My noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) gave his reasons for thinking that it was an error to suppose that that had been the result of the Act. Now, I agree entirely with Lord Cowper in regard to the general principle which ought to govern us—I mean those general principles which induced a great reform in the infliction of corporal punishment in our criminal procedure, and which seem equally opposed to our reverting to it unless in cases of absolute necessity. The noble Lord who has spoken last (the Earl of Carnarvon) added to this evidence the statement that in the opinion of all the Judges, and of all the Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, corporal punishment was desirable in certain cases. He did not give us any clue as to how he obtained that evidence.

THE EARL OF CARNARVON: That is a little enlarging my argument.

EARL GRANVILLE: Well, how far did the noble Earl go?

THE EARL OF CARNARVON: So far as I remember, what I stated was this — that it was the opinion of all those who were competent to pronounce an opinion—some Judges, some Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, some gentlemen engaged in the control of prisoners —that corporal punishment was viewed by the criminal classes with singular apprehension and terror. I do not think I went beyond that.

EARL GRANVILLE: The introduction of the word "some" makes the whole difference, because that is exactly *à propos* of what my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) pointed out—and it was admitted by the noble Marquess—that the Judges act so very differently that, whereas some do apply corporal punishment, others make it a habit never to do so. I may remind your Lordships that when Lord Aberdare, who I am sorry to say is not here to-night, but who spoke with the authority of Home Secretary at the time of the passing of that Bill——

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Sir George Grey was Home Secretary at that time.

EARL GRANVILLE: At any rate he put forward certain facts which were opposed to the conclusions of the noble

Marquess, and entirely coincided with those of my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell). I cannot pledge my memory to the exact statement Lord Aberdare made, but I think it was to the effect that he attributed the improvement that had taken place to the resolute action taken by the police against garrotters, and the arrest of the principal gang who were doing the mischief, and the severe sentences which were passed by Lord Bramwell. This all points to the conclusion that the cessation of the crime of garrotting took place before that Act came into operation at all. If that is the fact—and I think Lord Aberdare was not likely to be mistaken upon the subject, nor is my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) likely to be entirely wrong in his recollection—I would recommend that a short interval should take place before the Second Reading of the Bill to ascertain the facts which, viewed from different sides, are now entirely in dispute.

*Lord FITZ GERALD: My Lords, if your Lordships give a Second Reading to this Bill, it is one of such a character, and so very important, that it would probably go to one of the recently-appointed Grand Committees—I suppose the Grand Committee on Law — and there would be ample opportunity to make all the inquiries which are necessary. Now let us see what is the Bill and what is the object of the Bill. The object of my noble Friends is that the practice of persons engaging in burglary, being at the time armed, with the intent, probably, to take human life if necessary to enable them to carry out their felonious intent, should be put an end to; and he aims at deterring from that by vesting in the Judges a power, in aggravated cases, to inflict corporal punishment. When my noble Friend, some few days ago, put a question to the Government as to whether they were prepared to introduce any measure with a view to regulating and limiting the pernicious habit of carrying revolvers, his question was directed to this alone, but I think he has now very properly extended it. I am not in a position to speak from any experience as to the effect of such legislation in this country, and I will not presume to criticize the advice which the noble and learned Lord on the Front Bench has given us. It is said that the effect of the Act passed in 1863 was, by deterring parties from the repetition of the offence, to secure the cessation of the crime of garrotting. Now, under the Bill now before your Lordships, it is proposed to apply the punishment only to very aggravated cases—cases where parties go armed for the purpose of committing burglary, and prepared presumably to use their firearms, and, if necessary for their purposes, to take human life. For a Bill going to that extent I am prepared to give my assent, and I think your Lordships should give this Bill, which is designed with a very proper object, a Second Reading. I am not alarmed by the proposal to leave the question of the infliction of the punishment to the discretion of the Judges. I hope we shall never come to a time when in England there shall be a law taking away the discretion of the Judge, and forcing him to inflict in every case coming within the category the utmost punishment that the law empowers him to inflict. You must have that judicial discretion. It may be that in the case of a weak man the power will not be put in force; but in the case of strong Judges it will be exercised for the public protection. I had one opportunity of considering the effect of corporal punishment, and that was on a very remarkable occasion. Some noble Lords may still recollect that in 1867 there was an armed insurrection in Ireland. On that occasion many hundred prisoners were arrested in a state of insurrection. They were captured by the military and marched into Dublin, and subsequently committed for trial. It was my lot to have to assist upon the Special Commission with my late friend Lord Justice Whiteside in the trial of those prisoners. The then Viceroy (Lord Abercorn) wisely considered that it would be simply elevating the prisoners to the position of political martyrs to try them for treason or high treason, and accordingly the Government determined that the trial was to take place under an Act of George II., which gave power to imprison, and in certain cases corporal punishment could be inflicted. Now, Chief Justice Whiteside and I consulted together, and we came ultimately to the conclusion that as no violence had been used, as there had been no house broken into and no life had been taken, these were cases in which we ought not to inflict corporal punishment. In passing a short sentence of imprisonment on the first man tried under the Act, we announced from the Bench that where no outrage had been actually committed corporal punishment would not be inflicted. Now, what was the result? The result was that hundreds of trials were compressed into a few days because the people, relieved from the fear of corporal punishment, came in and pleaded guilty and received very moderate sentences. Now, my Lords, what was the result? The country became aware from the judical statement that there was power in such cases to inflict corporal punishment, and since then there has been no playing at insurrection. I am quite prepared to arm the Judges with this discretionary power.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, this is not, perhaps, the time for discussing the very remarkable instance to which the noble and learned Lord has alluded; but I feel bound to say this —that I am exceedingly glad that he and his learned Colleague came to the conclusion, as they did, that the cases of insurrection to which he has alluded were not fit cases for corporal punishment, and I desire to express my very strong conviction that in no case whatever in this country would it ever be right to inflict corporal punishment in cases of insurrection. I sincerely trust that no such attempt will ever be made, and of this I am perfectly certain—that if it is ever made it will revolt every man of right principle in this country. But that is quite apart from the questions before us, of which everybody must have heard, and which everybody must wish to see suppressed. The question here is whether corporal punishment is a punishment which is likely to effect the object which we have in view. I confess I doubt it extremely. It is always very difficult to ascertain whether certain effects follow from certain causes, and I have no special knowledge, but only general remembrance, as to what followed immediately after the passing of the Act of 1863; but what I would remind your Lordships of is this— that this system of flogging was the old system in this country inflicted on the largest possible scale; and experience— long experience—the experience of generations showed conclusively that this punishment of flogging did not deter from crime. On the contrary, the classes subjected to it became indifferent to the punishment, and one of the great reforms in the present century was the abandonment of what was found to be a thoroughly bad system, and the adoption of another system; and, for my part, I am not in favour of reverting to the old system. Some people imagine that criminals will be deterred by the punishment of flogging. I do not believe it. There may be two or three cases where the man may be alarmed, but I believe that long experience of the criminal population shows that where flogging has been adopted the deterrent effects are very small indeed. But, on the other hand, I am of opinion that some additional punishment is required in the cases to which this Bill refers, and the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) hinted at what I think would be a very practical improvement in the law—namely, that the possession of firearms in the cases mentioned in this Bill should be made a distinct and additional offence. Whenever a man who is committing an offence of this kind is found in the possession of firearms under the circumstances stated, he should be charged, as an entirely distinct and separate offence, with having arms in his possession, loaded or unloaded. That seems to me to be a far more prudent mode of dealing with this matter than by flogging. The fact of the matter is that, besides the doubt which exists as to the efficacy of the punishment of flogging, there is so very large and wide a sentiment in the community against it that it does not receive that moral sanction, on the whole, which is, as the noble Marquess justly observed, absolutely necessary in order that the punishment should have any effect. The noble and learned Lord (Lord FitzGerald) suggested that this Bill should go to the Standing Committee on Law. I sincerely trust that that course will not be taken. This is a matter in which Lay Lords have quite as good opportunity of forming a private opinion as any noble and learned Lord. It is not a question of law, but a question as to what should be the punishment. If it is desirable to have an inquiry into the fact, and to see whether or not my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) is justified in the conclusion he draws as to the effect of the Act of 1863, then the proper course would be not to refer the Bill after a Second Reading, but to refer the whole subject to a Select Committee. If the Bill is proposed to be read a second time now, I shall certainly vote against it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, the useful discussion that we have had does not seem to have resulted in any practical suggestion as to what is to be done with an evil which is admitted to exist; and when I say that, I do not accept the observations that the noble Lord has just made. Practically this offence—the one which strikes everyone as the one that is on the increase, and which ought to be checked—is the possession of firearms by burglars at night. I do not mean to say that it is absolutely confined to that, but that is practically the real evil that is growing, and that people feel to be a very serious danger. Now, the punishment for burglary at present is penal servitude for life. How are we going to increase that? You can only do it by imposing the punishment of death. I do not suppose that that is the practical suggestion which will be made. Therefore it seems to me that if the only suggestion is that you are to increase the punishment, which already has reached the extreme, that is no very great contribution to the solution of the problem. Now, the discussion has taken rather a historical turn. I confess that my memory was rather against that of my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell), and I sent for the only book that I could at the moment lay my hand on; I do not mean to say it is any great historical authority, but so far as it goes it entirely supports what the noble Marquess said. I find in "Haydn's Dictionary of Dates," in the article on "Garrotting," after describing what the offence is, it says—

> "Many attempts to strangle made by thieves termed garrotters, in the winter of 1862-3, led to the passing of an Act in July 1863 to punish these acts by flogging, which proved effectual."

I do not mean at all to say that there may not be important matters to be discovered in the statistics to which the noble and learned Lord refers, and, between this time and the time when the Bill is likely to be parted with by your Lordships one way or another, it would be very desirable that those statistics should be laid before us. But undoubtedly this fact cannot be denied, that at one period—namely, the period referred to in the book, 1862-3—there was a very great epidemic of violent assaults in the streets at night of the character which is described as garrotting. It is equally true that certainly for a great number of years that species of crime has become very rare. Now, I quite feel that it is very difficult always to trace effects to their causes, but certainly the general impression of a great number of persons is in that direction. The noble Lord (the Earl of Carnarvon) referred to the opinion of the Chairmen of Quarter Sessions and persons who were engaged in the administration of justice. I can supply him with some facts which, perhaps, he was not aware of. Within the last three or four months I have received several presentments of Grand Juries recommending that flogging should be added to the punishment of persons in possession of firearms at night, and convicted of burglary, and recommending it strongly as being the only effectual deterrent in their view to the increase of crime, which they all testify to have taken place. I do not quite understand the attitude of my noble Friend (Lord Herschell) in the observations he addressed to your Lordships; because, while admitting the evil, and desiring apparently some additional punishment, and admitting that some remedy or another was required, his main objection to the Bill appeared to be directed to the leaving it in the discretion of the Judges to order this particular form of punishment. The logical conclusion from my noble and learned Friend's argument appeared to be that there should be no discretion in the Judges, but that they should be compelled to order flogging in every case, if flogging be any deterrent at all. I will only say one word more upon the subject. I believe it is quite true to say that the old system, which inflicted flogging for every offence, did revolt everybody's sense of right; but if you appropriate flogging only to such crimes as really are disgraceful, and ought to degrade a man, and ought to make him feel for the rest of his life the degradation of having been flogged, it by no means follows that that will revolt the moral sense of the community.

As to the suggestion of the noble Lord (Lord Fitz Gerald) that the penalty should apply to burglars carrying knives or life-preservers, as well as to those carrying firearms, of course, this is all a matter of degree; but I shall not be opposed to the extension of the measure to the carrying of any weapon of deadly character, and presumably carried with a view to its use in resisting capture. Then, the question is whether flogging is a punishment which will be deterrent. Well, I will not say it is the universal opinion, but a vast number of people believe that, applied in certain cases, and not applied indiscriminately, it has an immense effect. Under these circumstances, I hope your Lordships will give a Second Reading to the Bill.

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: I would like to say one or two words in reply to what has fallen from the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Herschell). One of his arguments was that punishment ought to be certain. I agree with him, but, even if all my noble and learned Friend says about flogging and non-flogging Judges be correct, the criminal can never tell before what particular Judge he will be tried. The noble and learned Lord quoted statistics which were obtained in the other House. I should like to have seen them on the Table here. I have not the slightest doubt that the noble and learned Lord has quoted them accurately; but, at the same time, I have a fancy for seeing those figures before me before coming to any conclusion upon them, because we all know that figures can be made to prove anything. One fact we do know: that shortly after the passing of the Act of 1863 the crime of garrotting practically ceased. The noble and learned Lord referred to the sentences of Lord Bramwell. I well remember those sentences, and the sensation they created; but he forgot that the perpetrators of those crimes were all liable to penal servitude before the Bill of my noble Friend (Lord Norton) was passed, and yet the fact that they were so liable, and that such sentences were not infrequently passed, had not a deterrent effect. It seems to me a most monstrous inference to suppose that the cessation of crime arose from those sentences and not from the Bill, which was practically concurrent with them. With regard to the suggestion by the noble and learned Lord (Lord Fitz Gerald) as to applying the penalty further to the possession of knives or life-preservers, the one specific object of this Bill is to check the growing practice of the criminal classes carrying firearms, and I considered that it was desirable to deal separately with a matter of this importance. As to what has been said by the noble Lord behind me (the Earl of Carnarvon) with respect to the exclusion of the Quarter Sessions from the exercise of this power, my noble Friend is aware that crimes punishable with penal servitude for life are already excluded from Quarter Sessions, so that the limitation in the Bill is quite logical. The noble Earl opposite (Earl Granville) suggested that the Second Reading should be deferred in order to give time for the consideration of the statistics on this subject. The noble Earl will forgive me for reminding him that I gave notice of my intention to introduce this Bill almost at the commencement of the Session, and there has been ample time for anyone who was opposed to its principle to have examined fully into the question, and—if he will forgive my saying so—giving notice of opposition to the measure, which no one has done up to the present moment. My Lords, I think I can add nothing to what has already been said in favour of the principle of the Bill; and as to the other points which have been suggested, they can be adequately considered in Committee. I conclude, therefore, now simply by asking your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading.

On Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," their Lordships divided:—Contents 37; Non-Contents 9.

Bill read 2ª accordingly.

THE ROYAL NAVAL ARTILLERY VOLUNTEER CORPS.

QUESTION. OBSERVATIONS.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH, in rising to call attention to the Naval Defence Act, 1888, so far as that Act affects the duties and liabilities of the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteer Corps, said: My Lords, in reply to a question put in the House of Commons on Tuesday last, the First Lord of the Admiralty is reported to have said that—

> "As the Act of 1873 now stands, the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers are not liable for service away from their own ports, except in case of invasion or apprehended invasion; so that, except in this contingency, the Admiralty, under the existing Act, have no means of availing themselves of their services. The Admiralty would be glad to give encouragement to this force when they can see a way of advantageously employing them. They are ready to supply guns, ammunition, and instruction; but they cannot undertake to supply ships for local ports."

Now, if the Corps merely existed under the Act of 1873, the noble Lord would have been perfectly right, but the Act which was passed last year, called the Naval Defence Act, altered the situation, and repealed a portion of the Act of 1873. I will just read the alteration which the last Act produced. Section 3 enacts—

> "Whenever an Order is in force directing that the Royal Naval Reserve, or any part thereof, shall be called into actual service, it shall be lawful for Her Majesty the Queen to direct the Admiralty to call out for actual service the Naval Artillery Volunteer Corps, or any of them, and such directions shall have full effect as a direction under Section 16 of the Naval Artillery Volunteers Act, 1873, and that Act shall have effect accordingly."

So that the argument of the Admiralty as regards the localizing of the Corps is rendered incorrect by this Act of Parliament. I hope your Lordships will excuse me for placing this very important difference before the House. It was stated by the First Lord the other night that the Admiralty would have difficulty in finding work for the corps to do. But if the Naval Reserve are called into active service, the Coast Guard and Marines would be taken from their present posts, and it would be perfectly natural that their places should be filled by a body of trained men such as the Naval Volunteers. I do not wish to detain the House by enlarging upon the subject, because your Lordships heard it discussed at length the other evening; but I cannot forbear stating that, in consequence of what passed the other night, I received a letter from a highly distinguished officer nearly at the head of his profession—an officer who has been engaged specially for the purpose of superintending the Royal Naval Reserve. This officer writes in the very highest terms of the Naval Volunteers, and speaks of them as "a well educated body, full of zeal, longing to be of practical use in the Navy, and well drilled, and serving without pay." I may ask your Lordships to remember that the Naval Volunteer Corps was made use of in the French War, under the name of the Sea Fencibles, consisting of, I think, some 30,000 to 50,000 men; on one occasion, I believe they were actually made use of by Lord Nelson himself. I hope in what I have said on this subject I shall not be supposed to have intended to pass any slight on the present Board of Admiralty. As far as my opinion is worth anything, I think they have taken more positive steps towards the formation and organization of a competent Navy than have been taken by any Board of Admiralty within my recollection. I shall be glad to learn from the noble Lord who represents the Admiralty in this House, whether I am correct in the view which I put upon the Act of last year.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: Before I approach the question of the noble Lord, I would like to make this observation. There appears to be an impression abroad that the Admiralty wish to discourage rather than encourage the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers. As I said the other night, the Admiralty fully recognize the zeal and the energy displayed by that corps, and appreciate the willingness with which they come forward at great personal inconvenience to themselves, in order to learn and become masters of the various parts of their drill. In the course of the discussion the other evening my noble Friend who has just spoken referred to a speech made by the First Lord of the Admiralty, which he said had caused a considerable amount of pain to the Naval Volunteers. I immediately took upon myself to reply that I felt perfectly sure that my noble Friend in the House of Commons had not, in anything he had said, the slightest wish to reflect in any way upon the corps. My noble Friend Lord Ravensworth expressed his satisfaction at the disclaimer I made—a disclaimer which he said would have the effect of soothing the feelings of many of the Volunteers who, from misconception of what had been said in another place, felt very much aggrieved. Unfortunately, that disclaimer of mine did not find its way into the public Press, and I take this opportunity of repeating it, and I have the authority of the First Lord for saying that in all that he said nothing was further from his idea or intention or wish than to reflect in any way upon the corps. There are no doubt very great difficulties as to the employment of these Naval Volunteers. In addition to the capitation grant which was given by the present First Lord, the Admiralty undertake to provide guns and ammunition and instruction, but they have always from the outset declined to give ships for the purpose of training the Volunteers. They feel that the chief value—in fact the chief duty—of these Volunteers in the event of war would be to assist in the defence of the various mercantile ports. In those mercantile ports are many vessels of sufficient size to carry guns. They are handled by men who know every yard of the water in their own locality, and the Admiralty feel that that is the field for these Volunteers—that is the place where they might be most effectually made use of. Having provided instruction for these Volunteers, the Admiralty do not think it is unreasonable to expect that the various ports in which these small vessels exist should provide, for the purpose of their defence, vessels in which to put the Volunteers. The Admiralty cannot localize any of their men-of-war for the defence of any special port. They must have—I am sure any Government will insist upon this—a free hand. They must be able to send ships at any moment to any part of the world where they may be required. As I said the other evening, the Admiralty would gladly welcome any suggestion that could be made for the better utilizing of this corps. With regard to the military Volunteers, they are provided with arms and ammunition, and they take care of themselves. On the other hand, the Naval Volunteers are provided with arms and ammunition, but they require the Admiralty to provide them ships for the purpose of training. Vessels have to be, and are at times, diverted from their regular duties, but it is only at considerable inconvenience to the public service, and the Admiralty are not unnaturally, under these circumstances, reluctant to add to their burden by the increase of a force that requires these special facilities to enable them to train. As I said the other evening, by the Act under which the corps is embodied, they could not be called upon to serve away from their own ports except in cases of "apprehended invasion." But I should have added in case of "imminent national danger" or "great emergency." It is perfectly true that the Act allows the Volunteers to be called out on the same emergency as the Royal Naval Reserve, and that when called out they may be employed on board of any ship engaged in the defence of the coasts, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and the seas adjacent. But suppose they were wanted suddenly to go to the Mediterranean or to some more distant point: any individual Volunteer could claim, under the Act under which he is enrolled, to be removed from the ship. It is only by his own consent that he could be taken from the coasts immediately adjacent to this country. That is the great difference between the Royal Naval Volunteers and the Royal Naval Reserve. Unless there is a larger field for the utilization of these Volunteers than now exists, the Admiralty feel some hesitation as to any extension of the Corps. I have heard it said—and I believe my noble Friend will corroborate the statement—that the Volunteers are only too anxious to go to any part of the world where they may be required. I do not know whether that is true or not, but I am delighted to hear it; and I have not the slightest doubt that, if the occasion arose, they would serve with credit to themselves and advantage to the country. But I would like to know whether that statement applies simply to the London Corps or to the whole body of Naval Volunteers.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: I believe that the whole corps are perfectly of the same feeling as the London Corps.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: I am very glad to hear it. What is proposed by the Admiralty is this—that representatives of the various corps should meet and agree upon some common course of action for the employment of Volunteers in time of war, either by co-operating in manning vessels, or in any other way that offers a satisfactory solution of what is really a difficult problem. If they do that, the Admiralty will be prepared to appoint an officer to meet and confer with them, in the hope of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. I think, my Lords, that suggestion on the part of the Admiralty ought to satisfy the wishes and views, as at present expressed, of the Naval Volunteer Corps.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: I think the suggestion of the Admiralty is a very excellent one, and one which will be gladly received by the Volunteer officers. What they complain of, amongst other things, is that they have not been in the past sufficiently consulted in matters respecting their organization.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: I hope the noble Viscount will not misunderstand me. We suggest that the different corps should consult with each other and propound a scheme. Having done that, the Admiralty will be prepared to appoint an officer to confer with them and go into the matter.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: I am sure the corps will gladly accept the suggestion.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, till Thursday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 2nd April, 1889.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SUCK DRAINAGE BILL (*by Order*).

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. HARRIS (Galway, E.): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. I may say that both the landlords and the tenant farmers and all persons interested in the district are entirely agreed as to the desirableness of this measure; and I hope that the Government will support it in passing.

Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

QUESTIONS.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. HENRY PEASE (York, N. R., Cleveland) asked the First Commissioner of Works when he would be prepared to make some proposal for enlarging the House of Commons, so as to provide a seat for every Member?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, University of Dublin): Any scheme for enlarging the House of Commons so as to provide a seat for every Member would necessarily involve large structural changes and considerable expense, and I venture to think that no such scheme should be proposed except in obedience to the wish of the House, definitely and deliberately expressed after careful inquiry.

TRAWLING IN THE CLYDE.

MR. JOHN SINCLAIR (Ayr Burghs(asked the Lord Advocate if it was the intention of the Fishery Board to issue a bye-law prohibiting beam trawling in the Firth of Clyde within a line drawn from the Mull of Kintyre across by Pladda and Ailsa Craig to Corsewall Point; when such bye-law was likely to be passed and put in force; whether the Government now saw their way to sanction such restriction of trawling in the estuary of the Clyde; and whether it was the case that the Secretary for Scotland has declared that a Bill was in course of preparation to effect the same or similar ends?

*A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Wigtonshire) in the absence of the Lord Advocate, said: As regards the first three paragraphs of the question, the Fishery Board have no power to pass a bye-law prohibiting trawling within the points mentioned, and as regards the fourth question, I am informed that the Secretary for Scotland has no recollection of making any such declaration. I may call the hon. Member's attention to an Amendment on the Herring Fishery Bill which has been put on the paper by the hon. Member for South Ayrshire, which will put the question of prohibiting trawling within this area before the House for its decision.

THE ARDEE BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he was aware that the Ardee Board of Guardians recently gave the contract for the erection of a number of labourers' cottages to a person named Cooke, son of an evicted tenant on Lord Massereene's estate, who is wholly unskilled, being only accustomed to farm work, and that several skilled masons, including tenants on Lord Massereene's estate who had paid their rent, also tendered for the work, but their tenders were rejected; whether the two sureties accepted by the Guardians for the due carrying out of the work were two persons named Lawless and Finnegan, both of whom have been evicted from their holdings on Lord Massereene's estate for non-payment of rent; and if the Local Government Board intended to take any steps to protect the interests of the ratepayers?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The clerk of the Ardee Union reports that it is the case that the Guardians accepted the tender of Bernard Cooke for the erection of 11 labourers' cottages. Cooke is the son of an evicted tenant on Lord Massereene's estate, and, so far as the clerk is aware, has no skilled knowledge as a builder, he having been accustomed to farm work only. Of the three other persons who tendered, two were masons, and the clerk believes they are tenants of Lord Massereene, but he has no information as to their having paid their rents. The Guardians are represented to have accepted Cooke's tender on the ground that it was the lowest. The clerk states that the sureties are not the persons mentioned in the question, but two solvent farmers named Denis M'Cullough and Thomas M'Donnell. The works will be, in accordance with the usual practice, inspected and reported upon by one of the Local Government Board Engineering Inspectors prior to the issue of the instalments of the loan sanctioned.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has the hon. and learned Gentleman ascertained whether the Guardians did more than accept the lowest tender? Would the auditor have passed the contract if they had done otherwise, and would not the Guardians have been surcharged?

MR. MADDEN: I do not think it is the duty of the auditor to surcharge the Guardians merely because they did not accept the lowest tender. I do not think they are bound to accept the lowest tender.

MR. SEXTON: If they accepted any but the lowest tender, would not the auditor call on them to explain why they had done so?

MR. MADDEN: If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to have information I will endeavour to obtain it for him, but I do not think that this is a matter which arises out of the question.

INDIA—STATISTICAL ABSTRACT—IMPORT OF PETROLEUM FROM THE UNITED STATES.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN (Hythe) asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been called to the fact that the "Statistical Abstract relating to British India," last published, shows (pp. 142, 143) that the imports into India from the United States of America, had increased from a value of £297,717 in 1878, to £1,887,396 in 1887; whether the larger item in these figures was petroleum; why petroleum was not to be found in the classification of articles of import; and if he could state the value of petroleum from the United States imported into India in 1887, and the probable value in the year about to end?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first and second paragraph is "Yes." In future volumes of the Statistical Abstracts, petroleum will be shown separately. For the year ending March, 1887, the value of petroleum from the United States imported into India was Rx1,136,000; for the year ending March, 1888, Rx981,000; and for ten months to the 31st of January, 1889, Rx802,000.

AUSTRALIAN POSTAL RATES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked whether the Postmaster General would take into consideration the advisability of altering the title "long sea route" to "cheap sea route" in all advertisements and official notifications of the new fourpenny service to Australia direct?

*SIR H. MAXWELL: My right hon. Friend does not consider that it would be desirable to make the change suggested. He prefers the term "All sea route," and intends to adopt it in all official notices issued by the Post Office in future in relation to mails for Australia embarked on board the Imperial contract packets in the Thames or at Plymouth.

POST OFFICE WORK FOR OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON asked the Postmaster General whether the total value of Post Office work done for other Departments, stated in the Estimates at about £400,000, includes the cost of free money orders issued for Inland Revenue purposes, and the services rendered in recovering revenue; and what is the estimated value of the postal services performed for the Inland Revenue Department for the current year, including the free money orders, which for the nine months ending 31st December last exceeded a quarter of a million?

*Sir H MAXWELL: In the absence of my right hon. Friend the Postmaster General, I will answer the question. It is presumed my hon. Friend refers to the sum of £366,000 on page 113 of the Estimates for the current year, which is the Estimate of the cost of the conveyance of letters and parcels only. If he will refer to the page quoted he will see that £171,700 is the estimated cost of the correspondence of the Post Office. If that be deducted from the total, it will be seen that the value of conveyance for other Departments is not £400,000, but about £195,000. This does not include the cost of money orders issued for Inland Revenue purposes, or of any other service than the conveyance of official correspondence and parcels. The estimated value of the postal services performed for the Inland Revenue Department, including the cost of official money orders, is £115,000.

ADMIRALTY CONTRACTS.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty why the Contract Department, in the years 1886-7 and 1887-8, placed orders for preserved butter and salt pork, amounting to £24,910, outside the United Kingdom; and if, having regard to the importance of encouraging Home industries and to the agricultural depression in Great Britain and Ireland, directions can be given that in future no article required for the Public Service produced at Home is to be ordered from abroad?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Forwood, Lancashire, Ormskirk): Tenders for pork were invited by public advertisement in 1886 and 1887, and those for butter from a selected list of firms connected with the Irish as well as the foreign butter trade. In 1886 the tenders from Cork packers of pork for delivery at Haulbowline were accepted to a value of about £5,000 at a slightly higher price than that paid for the pork offered for delivery at Deptford by Danish packers. The Irish tenders for delivery at Deptford were 8 per cent higher. In 1887 orders for £7,600 in value were given to Irish firms for delivery at Haulbowline at higher prices than for Danish-packed, delivered at Deptford. The value of butter purchased was only £1,500 in the two years. It is used chiefly by officers in troopships, and samples of Irish and Danish manufacture were submitted to a Committee of Officers, who chose the Danish as preferable for the Service. It is the practice of the Department to give a preference in all cases to Home produce, and, as will be seen from the Parliamentary Returns, the proportion of purchases of foreign-made stores compared to those of British origin are exceedingly small, being only £48,000 out of a total of some millions.

INLAND REVENUE.

Mr. MACDONALD CAMERON (Wick Burghs) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it was true that in the proposed scheme to abolish the Collector at Great Winchester Street, City, the Receiver General is to undertake merely the receipt of cash, and to leave the really important duties of collector to be done elsewhere; that the Receiver General was to require the taxes collected in the City to be paid to him at Somerset House, instead of as heretofore to the Collector of Inland Revenue within the City; was the majority of the Committee engaged in considering the question of breaking the collection and reorganizing the Receiver General's post in favour of the proposal; and had the proposal the approval of the Chairman of the Board and of the practical officers who advise the Board?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I must respectfully decline to give information as to proceedings of Departmental Committees, at least until I have myself been able to form a judgment on them. I cannot accept the questions of the hon. Member as indicating correct facts, as I do not see how he could have had any intimation of the confidential proceedings of the Committee without a breach of confidence, which I am reluctant to think possible in so well-regulated and discreet a Department of the Civil Service as the Inland Revenue.

INDIA—FINANCIAL STATEMENT, 1889—POSITION OF SILVER—THE CURRENCY QUESTION.

MR. HOYLE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) asked the Under Secretary of State for India if his attention has been called to the following remarks made by the Finance Minister for India in his Annual Financial Statement for 1889-90, in reference to the position of silver, that "the present condition is not one of permanent equilibrium," and that the action of the United States of America and the Continental Nations of Europe may bring on a crisis at any moment, and that no solution of the currency question is possible without international agreement; if so, when may a full report of his speech be expected in this country; and will copies of it be placed in the Library for the use of Members?

SIR J. GORST: The full Report should arrive in this country on April 22. I will see that a copy of it is placed in the Library.

SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government had been directed to the declaration of the Government of India in this year's Budget statement, that "no solution of the currency question is possible without international agreement"; and whether Her Majesty's Government would take any steps to obtain such an international agreement?

*MR. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Member by the "currency question" means the question of bi-metallism, then it is true that no solution is possible without international agreement. But the point is whether it would be possible even with international agreement. That is a question upon which the Royal Commission is hopelessly divided; but the House will have an opportunity of discussing the matter on the Motion of the hon. Member for Lincolnshire.

THE HURRICANE AT SAMOA.

SIR GEORGE BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he could give the House any information as to the acts of seamanship by which Her Majesty's Ship *Calliope* escaped disaster during the hurricane which visited the Samoa Islands last month; and whether orders had been given for any of Her Hajesty's ships to visit those islands for the protection or aid of those who may have suffered by the hurricane?

MR. FORWOOD: No detailed Report has yet been received as to the circumstances under which the *Calliope* effected her escape from Samoa; but so far as can be gathered she must have returned there after the hurricane was over and conveyed the news to Auckland, from which place it was sent to England by cable. Full details will, no doubt, be reported by the Commander-in-Chief in the next mail. The Commander-in-Chief on the Australian Station has ordered Her Majesty's ship *Rapid* to leave Auckland to-morrow for Samoa, calling at Fiji.

LO BENGULA'S CONCESSIONS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is a fact that Lo Bengula denies having knowingly signed a concession such as that held by Messrs. Rudd, and asserts that the Missionary, who acted as interpreter between him and Mr. Rudd, erroneously interpreted the document to him; whether he will lay the concession upon the Table; whether, in view of the fact that Lo Bengula's territory is within the area of British influence, he would be allowed to grant such a concession to a person who is not a British subject; and, if not, whether Her Majesty's Government deem that he is entitled to grant a concession which excludes all but three British subjects and their agents from mining operations in his territory; whether, if the agents of the company (being British subjects) put themselves at the head of an armed force of Lo Bengula's subjects, and hinder, by force, British subjects from carrying on mining operations in the territory, they are acting in violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act; whether he has observed the following announcement in the *Bechuanaland News*:—

"I hear it is published in the newspapers that I have granted a concession of the minerals in all my country to Charles Dunell Rudd, Rochford Maguire, and Francis Robert Thompson. As there is a great misunderstanding about this, all action in respect of said concession is hereby suspended pending an investigation to be made by me in my country. (Signed) Lo Bengula, Royal Kraal, Matabeleland. Jan. 18, 1889."

Whether he is aware that, on 17th November, 1887, Lo Bengula signed a concession to Joseph Wood, Edward Chapman, and William Francis, granting the exclusive right to mine, to erect mills and smelting works, and to use all water, in the land between the Rivers Shasha and Maklutei, in consideration of a payment of a rental of £100 per annum; and whether he can see his way to put an end to all exclusive concessions granted to British subjects within the South African territory which is under British influence?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, Toxteth): Her Majesty's Government have no official information on the subject referred to in the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question. The concession is among Papers which are being prepared for early presentation to Parliament. The answer to the third paragraph is in the affirmative; the declaration of British influence does not enable Her Majesty's Government to control the grant of concessions by the chiefs. In reply to the fourth paragraph, the Foreign Enlistment Act cannot, it is conceived, have any bearing on these questions. Her Majesty's Government have seen the announcement quoted in the fifth paragraph, but have no means of judging whether it is authentic. It would seem to have been obtained, if genuine, by some parties competing with Messrs. Rudd and Company. The persons in the sixth paragraph mentioned allege that they have obtained a concession of the nature described on the date mentioned; but the land in question is in dispute, being claimed by Khama, who is under British protection, and all parties purporting to hold concessions have been warned not to enter the disputed area. We have learnt that the concession mentioned in the first question has already been largely shared with other Companies and persons, and it appears to Her Majesty's Government that the best mode of putting an end to all exclusive and competing concessions in that part of South Africa which is under British influence may be by uniting all valid concessions under one control, subject to important modifications, as for example the supply of arms, and also to such restrictions as may fully secure the interests of the natives and all other legitimate claims.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to carry out that policy of not interfering with the rights of the chiefs to make concessions, with a view to put an end to the difficulty?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I can only give the same answer that I gave the other day, that within the sphere of British influence we are able to advise, but we cannot do more, in a country which is not under our protection, and we cannot prevent the Ruler of that country from making a concession.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Is there any authority from which we can gather information as to what "the sphere of British influence" means?

MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): On the 8th of May last did not Lord Knutsford express a strong opinion as to these concessions in regard to territory under the protection of the British Government?

BARON H. DE WORMS: Perhaps the hon. Member will kindly give notice of that question.

THE CASE OF JOHN WITHEY.

MR. LEWIS FRY (Bristol, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he had had under consideration the case of John Withey, now under sentence of death in Horfield Gaol, Bristol, for the murder of his wife on the 11th of February last; whether he was aware that the jury stated in giving their verdict that there was no premeditation on the part of the prisoner, and recommended him to mercy on that ground, and on that of previous good character; whether ten of the jury had since forwarded to the Home Office a memorial stating that there was no direct or positive evidence that Withey killed his wife, nor any evidence of premeditation, and strongly repeating their recommendation to mercy; and whether, under the circumstances of the case, the finding of the jury was equivalent in law to a verdict of manslaughter only, and not of wilful murder?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): My answer to the first three paragraphs of the question of the hon. Member is in the affirmative; and to the last in the negative. The matter is engaging my most earnest attention, and I am in communication with the learned Judge with regard to it.

COST OF THE POLICE.

MR. FELLOWES (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether all payments by Government towards the cost of the police (beyond those which may be due for the year ended 29th September last, and were unpaid on 31st March, 1889) are henceforth to be discontinued; and, if so, whether the County Councils are to be responsible for these debts contracted before they came into existence?

MR. MATTHEWS: My answer to both questions is in the affirmative. The Government contribution in respect of all police expenditure accrued up to the 29th of September last was paid before the 31st of March, and no further direct contribution in aid of police expenditure will be made. I am advised that under the Local Government Act contribution to police expenditure during the police year, from the 30th of September last to the 29th of September next, becomes a charge against the County Councils, and has to be met by them out of the revenues which will be handed over to them by the Government in respect of the financial year from the 31st of March, 1889, to the 1st of April, 1890.

CHARGE OF ASSAULT AGAINST A METROPOLITAN POLICEMAN.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, on Tuesday last, application was made by the legal representative of the Home Office (Mr. Wontner), at the Thames Police Court, for the adjournment of a summons for assault taken out by the steward of the International Workmen's Club against Detective Frost, until after the charges preferred by the police against members of the club have been tried at the County of London Sessions; whether this application was to be renewed on Wednesday next; whether it was the fact that Mr. W. M. Thompson, counsel for the complainant, stated that the case of his client would be prejudiced if such application were granted; and, whether, in the interests of justice, he would instruct Mr. Wontner not to press for such further adjournment?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. I must decline to interfere with the course pursued by the solicitor in this case. His application will be dealt with by the Magistrate in the exercise of his discretion, and he will, no doubt, carefully consider any objection that the counsel for the complainant may raise.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN.

MR. SEXTON asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the inquiry into the prison treatment of Mr. William O'Brien had concluded; what witnesses were examined; and how soon a Copy of the Evidence would be laid upon the Table?

MR. MADDEN: So far as the Chief Secretary is aware, the inquiry into the prison treatment of Mr. William OBrien has been concluded. The doctor, the Governor, the head warder, three other warders concerned, and the acting chaplain of Clonmel Prison, also Alderman Hackett and Mr. William O'Brien, have been examined. The evidence is now being printed, and will be laid on the Table as soon as it is ready.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

MR. SEXTON asked the Solicitor General for Ireland who were to act on the Commission, or Committee, to inquire into the treatment of prisoners; what were the terms of the directions upon which they were to act; and whether, pending the inquiry and report, prisoners sentenced under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, who refuse to wear the criminal garb would be forcibly stripped?

MR. MADDEN: The constitution of the Committee is not finally determined upon. Unexpected delays have occurred with regard to persons requested to serve. As soon as the Committee is appointed, the terms and directions on which they are to act will be laid on the Table of the House. In answer to the last paragraph, I have to say that rules embodying the opinions which the Chief Secretary has expressed in this House upon the subject of prison dress have been provisionally passed and put in force. They will, however, of course not apply specially to persons imprisoned under the Criminal Law Act, 1887, but will be of general application to persons confined in local prisons in Ireland.

INDISPOSITION OF THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

MR. SEXTON, who had on the Paper several questions to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, said, he would not put them to the Solicitor General, but preferred to hold them over until the right hon. Gentleman was in his place.

MR. MADDEN: Unfortunately my right hon. Friend is suffering from indisposition, which I hope is slight; but he will not be in his place in the House to-day.

GOVERNOR OF CEYLON.

SIR EDWARD WATKIN asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether information has reached the Colonial Office that a Memorial is now being circulated for signature in Ceylon, praying for an extension of the term of office as Governor of Sir Arthur Gordon; whether that Memorial was circulated with the knowledge of Sir Arthur Gordon and under the influence of his confidential native aide-de-camp, the Maha Mudliyar; whether the Memorial has been forwarded to the native headmen, officers of Government, with the request that they will cause it to be signed by the people of the districts under their control; and, whether the Secretary of State will cause Sir A. Gordon to take steps to recall the Memorial from circulation, as having been issued by an officer under his immediate control to Native officers of his Government?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The Secretary of State has seen a statement in a Ceylon newspaper that such a Memorial was being circulated by "anonymous individuals calling themselves a Committee to the Mudliyars of the different districts to obtain the signatures of the natives under their influence." It was also stated by an anonymous correspondent that the author of the Memorial was the Maha Mudliyar; but the Secretary of State has no reason for believing that the Governor has any knowledge of the matter, and does not propose to issue any instructions to him on the subject.

IRELAND—TREATMENT OF MR. E. HARRINGTON.

MR. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland whether the wife of Mr. E. Harrington, M.P., accompanied by Mr. T. Harrington, M.P., on visiting Tullamore Prison on Monday, April 1st, were not allowed to see Mr. E. Harrington, though more than three months of his term have expired; whether Mr. E. Harrington has been allowed to receive a single letter or a single visit during these three months; and, whether the reason assigned for this refusal to permit letters or visits is that he gets no marks as a consequence of being engaged in preparing his defence before the Special Commission?

*MR. MADDEN: In reference to this question and another which appears in the name of the hon. Member for West Belfast, I have not yet been able to obtain the information to enable me to give an answer. I have no doubt that the Prisons Board will consider the special circumstances of the case, even if they have not done so already.

MR. SEXTON: Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that after Mr. Harrington had been imprisoned for three months his wife and brother, who had travelled a long distance to see him, were compelled, owing to the refusal of the governor, to leave without seeing him?

*MR. MADDEN: That is one of the particular matters of fact upon which I have not yet been able to obtain information.

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS—DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN.

Mr. CONYBEARE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it was the fact that certificates were given in the following form to the workmen who have been recently discharged from the Devonport Dockyard—

> "H.M. Dockyard, Devonport.
>
> This is to certify that ——— has been employed ——— years and ——— months in this dockyard as a hired (joiner, or as the case may be), and during that period his character and conduct have been very good, and he is a very good workman. He has been discharged in consequence of reduction of hands.
>
> (Signed) J. M. Huddy,
> Chief Constructor.
>
> Approved,
> ———————,
> Admiral Superintendent."

whether he can state how many of the total number of men recently discharged had been employed for a longer period than one year, either consecutively, or at different times; what steps are taken to ascertain which of the men should first be discharged, whether on account of efficiency or duration of service; and, whether, in effecting such discharges, any consideration is paid to character and good conduct?

Mr. FORWOOD: Eleven of the men recently discharged from Devonport Dockyard had been longer than a year in consecutive employ, but I cannot say how many had been previously employed from time to time, or for what total period they had been so employed. Efficiency and duration of service are the principles that guide the Dockyard officers when selecting men for discharge.

GRANTS IN AID OF LOCAL RATES.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he could state in what month the money in aid of local rates will be paid to the authorities in Ireland; and, when the anomaly of £1,000,000 having been paid in England against £5,000 in Ireland will be brought to a close?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I am informed that it is expected that the proportion of the probate duty grant payable to the Boards of Guardians in Ireland will be distributed during the present month; but the similar distribution to the road authorities cannot be made till they have furnished certain necessary information, and will, therefore, probably have to be deferred till next month.

Colonel NOLAN: What is the approximate date when the money is to get into the hands of the local authority? Will it be in a week or a fortnight?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I have no control over the matter, but I will inquire.

Colonel NOLAN: Will Thursday be a convenient day to repeat the question?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Yes.

THE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS FOR CORNWALL.

Mr. LABOUCHERE asked the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that at the recent County Council Elections for Cornwall the Saltash ballot boxes were improperly opened and their seals broken at the private house of the legal adviser to the deputy returning officer on the evening of the polling day, and that they remained open until the official counting of the votes at nine o'clock on the following morning; whether he would cause inquiries to be made with a view to punishing the offenders and preventing the recurrence of the offence against the Act; and, if not, what course he was prepared to take or to recommend in the matter?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Local Government Board have no jurisdiction in this matter; but I learn from the Under Sheriff for Cornwall that what is said to have taken place at the recent County Election is as follows:—The presiding officers handed to the legal adviser of the Deputy Returning Officer for the electoral divisions in the St. Germans Union with their ballot boxes their ballot paper account, which stated the number of ballot papers which had been used. This gentleman considered that he could not receipt the account and give the presiding officers their discharge unless they counted the papers in the several boxes. He, therefore, in the presence of each presiding officer and of his own son, all of whom had taken the declaration of secrecy, opened the boxes, and without looking at any of the papers counted them, and saw that they corresponded with the numbers in the ballot paper account. He then again locked each box and kept the key. It is stated that no voting paper was opened further than was necessary to count it, and that the boxes remained in his custody until the next morning, when they were re-opened for the purpose of counting in the usual way. I find that the Returning Officer believed this explanation to be true, and took no further notice of the matter. Section 3 of the Ballot Act imposes penalties on every person who, without due authority, opens any ballot box in use for the purposes of an election; but whether the gentleman referred to has rendered himself liable to penalties under this section is a question upon which I do not think I ought to express any opinion. If those locally interested consider that he has, they can institute proceedings against him if they think proper to do so, or they can bring the matter under the notice of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

MR. CONYBEARE: Apart from the question of penalties or otherwise, is there any question about the invalidity of the election?

*MR. RITCHIE: I do not think that any question of that kind can arise; but I have told the hon. Gentleman that I have no authority in the matter. Those who feel that they ought to take steps have a remedy.

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS—DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN.

MR. CONYBEARE asked the First Lord of the Admiralty, with regard to his letter of the 21st instant to the hon. the senior Member for Devonport, in reference to the present Dockyard discharges, in which he said—

> "This and other work was given to the Dockyard, and a large number of extra men were temporarily taken on for that purpose. Every one so taken on signed, before being employed, the form of which I enclose a copy. The work is now approaching completion, and the men engaged on it are not required, and therefore, in accordance with the terms of their engagement, their employment lapses. The total number so affected is about 450."

Whether it is the fact that, in addition to the above-mentioned 450 men, some 150 to 200 other men were noticed to be discharged on Saturday last; whether those notices have been withdrawn, and on what grounds; and, if not, whether they are to be carried into effect, and at what date; whether he could state the exact number of those so discharged, or noticed to be discharged, who were employed under the written agreement mentioned in his letter; and, how he explained the fact that a considerable number of men have been discharged, who, having been continuously employed in the yards and factory for periods ranging from three to 14 years, could not possibly have come under the terms of the signed agreement as to service referred to in his letter?

MR. FORWOOD: 419 men were discharged on the 23rd March, and 10 men received notice of discharge; but their notice has since been withdrawn, as sufficient work for their employment has been found. All the men discharged had been engaged for short service, except 11, and these men were discharged, as they were not so efficient in the performance of their duties as other men who had been in the service for a shorter period of time and who were retained.

THE COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

SIR GUYER HUNTER (Hackney, Central) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it was the case that certain formulæ for new bye-laws had been put forward by the Governing Body of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for his approval without their having been duly confirmed; whether he was aware that the said formulæ included a repetition of the demand that every member of the Council of the College to be elected in future shall declare his acceptance of the existing bye-laws of the College, including bye-law xvii., which the general body of the members have formally declared to be in contravention of their ancient rights, and are now contesting at law; and whether he would withhold his assent to the formulæ until the provisions referred to were withdrawn, or until they had been submitted to a meeting of the members of the College?

*MR. MATTHEWS: The matters referred to in the question are now under my consideration, and I will consult the Law Officers of the Crown before taking any action.

THE TRUCK ACT.

Mr. BRADLAUGH asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the District Inspector of Factories and the Home Office had received complaints of repeated breaches of the Truck Act at Barrowford, near Burnley; and, if so, on what dates; and, whether any, or what, action had been taken on such complaints?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: There has been a complaint to the Home Office from one person alleging breaches of the Truck Act at Barrowford. The letter containing the complaint was not sufficiently clear as to the facts to justify an action; and I have directed further inquiries.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that previous complaints have been made to the District Inspector of Factories, and that the time for imposing fines—namely, three months—has nearly elapsed?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I was not aware of the lapse of time.

SIGNALLING AT SEA—THE FATAL COLLISION OFF OSTEND.

Mr. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether inquiry will be held into the circumstances attending the fatal collision between the *Princess Henriette* and the *Comtesse de Flandre;* whether the Committee of Experts, appointed about 18 months ago by the Board of Trade to consider the whole question of signalling at sea, especially in foggy weather, have sent in their Report; and, if not, whether the Board of Trade will urge them to carry out their inquiry as promptly as possible; and whether, having regard to the increased frequency of collisions, the Board of Trade will take steps, in conjunction with the Foreign Office, to bring together, at the earliest date, the International Conference as to Signalling at Sea, originally suggested by the United States Government?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): The steamers referred to are ships belonging to a Foreign Government, and the collision between them happened on the high seas. Of course, the Board of Trade have no authority to order any inquiry. The Committee appointed to revise the International Code of Signal Book have made an interim Report which will be submitted to Foreign Governments as soon as the revised book is received from the printers. They are now considering the question of signalling in fogs, and are in communication with owners and masters of steamships thereupon. No time is being lost. The date on which the Maritime Conference at Washington will commence its labours rests with the Government of the United States, and has not yet been fixed.

IRELAND—FATHER M'FADDEN.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether his attention had been called to the following statement in the report given in the *Daily News* of the magisterial examination of the charge of murder against Father M'Fadden and others at Letterkenny—

> "The evidence being concluded, Dr. Houston endeavoured in vain to get a statement from Dr. Ross, Crown counsel, as to whether he was proceeding against all the defendants on the charge of murder. He then said that, in the default of the statement he wanted from the Crown, he could not address the magistrates;"

and whether it was the case that the Crown counsel refused to state whether he was proceeding against all the defendants on the charge of murder; and, if not, what was the charge stated to be?

Mr. MADDEN: All the defendants were charged with murder. The Crown counsel, in opening the case, stated the charge and the law bearing on it. He then placed before the magistrates evidence in support of this charge. Having done this, he was not called on, in response to the defendants' counsel, to do more than refer to his opening statement, which he did. The place of trial has not yet been fixed. The depositions in the case will in due course be laid before the Attorney General for Ireland, who will then exercise his discretion in the matter. As regards the time of trial, it will, in ordinary course, be had at next Assizes.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Is the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that it is possible under the Crimes Act to change the venue and to secure a more honest trial than at Belfast?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order

MR. MAC NEILL: I must ask for a reply to the question.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

COLLECTION OF TITHES IN WALES.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any application had been made for the use of the military for the collection of tithes in Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire; and, if so, whether the application would be granted?

MR. MATTHEWS: I was informed by the War Office on the 23rd of March that troops in aid of the civil power had been demanded by the magistrates at Cardigan. Troops were accordingly held in readiness, but on the 25th of March the Chief Constable reported that troops were not now required. I am not aware that the Pembrokeshire magistrates have made any application for military aid. The law enables the magistrates, if they believe the civil force is inadequate to keep the peace, to apply directly to the military authorities for aid. The application does not usually come to me, nor does it rest with me to refuse or grant it.

MR. T. ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman use his influence to prevent the troops from being employed until the recommendation of the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire has been acted upon?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have done all that I properly can do in the direction indicated. The local magistrates are responsible for the maintenance of the public peace; they are best acquainted with the facts in detail; and it would be most improper in me to interfere with their discretion.

MR. A. WILLIAMS (Glamorganshire, S.): With whom does the responsibility of granting the assistance of the forces of the Crown rest? Is it with the War Office?

MR. MATTHEWS: I apprehend that the War Office ought not to decline the application of the magistrates. The magistrates are responsible for the preservation of the public peace, and they are entitled to call upon all citizens to assist them. If the War Office are applied to they ought not to refuse.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: If they apply to the War Office would the War Office assist them without inquiry?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes; the magistrates are responsible for the preservation of peace.

MR. A. WILLIAMS: Have they the sole responsibility?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have given my answer.

EMIGRATION TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the following warning issued by the Préfet of Avignon to the people of that district:—

> "The Government is informed that those who emigrated from Avignon to foreign countries, and especially to Buenos Ayres, found themselves on their arrival in the most miserable position. The Préfet of Avignon, therefore, feels it his duty to warn the people to be on their guard against the offers and promises, generally false or exaggerated, that may be made to them by journals or agents who have an interest in tempting them to emigrate,"

and to a statement in the *Univers* of 28th March—

> that those who have succeeded in making their way back to France declare that thousands of French emigrants are dying of hunger in the streets of Buenos Ayres;"

and whether, if, on inquiry, he finds these statements to be true, he will issue a similar warning to the people in these countries who may be likely to emigrate to Buenos Ayres, particularly to poor emigrants from Ireland?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government have no information about the particular warning referred to in the question. After the inquiry on the subject addressed to me some days ago, Her Majesty's Representatives were directed to inquire whether any complaints had been received of the ill-treatment or disappointment of emigrants to the Argentine Republic. Lord Lytton replies that, although no official Report to that effect has been received from Buenos Ayres, the newspapers have mentioned that the Prefects of several Departments have complained lately of the return of such emigrants owing to the non-fulfilment on their arrival of promises made by a person calling himself an agent of the Argentine Government. Lord Vivian reports from Brussels that the Belgian Government has had no cause to complain of breach of faith or ill-treatment on the part of the Argentine Government towards Belgian immigrants, but that many have been grossly deceived as to the prospects of obtaining employment by persons who assume without authority to act as Emigration Agents, and who are said to receive a bonus from the Steamer Companies for every person sent out. The Emigrants Information Office in Broadway, Westminster, and the Irish Government are being furnished with all the information received by the Foreign Office on this subject, so that trustworthy intelligence may be afforded. The suggestion of giving a warning against unauthorized agents will be considered.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Has it come to the knowledge of the Government that complaints have been made that emigrants have had to put up with almost starvation diet on board ship, as well as hardships when they arrived?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: A returned emigrant has told me that he had been stinted in diet and had suffered seriously in consequence; but, as I have explained to the House, the Argentine Government undertook no responsibility whatever about the passage of emigrants; and therefore their treatment on board ship was only a matter of contract between them and the shipping company who took them out.

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Would it be possible to appoint anyone in the Argentine Republic to receive money sent from this country for the relief of the immigrants; because, if it were entrusted to the agents whose conduct was complained of, it would probably not reach those for whom it was intended.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have authorized our Minister at Buenos Ayres to employ an officer for the special purpose of looking after the interests of immigrants.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: How soon will the House be told the result of the consideration that has been promised as to the practicability of steps being taken by the Foreign Office, in connection with the Irish authorities, for warning poor Irish emigrants of the risks of this emigration?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Member only put down his question last night, and therefore it is manifestly impossible that it could have been considered before the meeting of the House to-day.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: I may explain that I spoke to the right hon. Gentleman some time ago upon the subject, and I was under the impression that he was in a position to give the information to-day. That was the reason of the short notice given to him.

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS—DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR: As I do not see the First Lord of the Admiralty in his place, may I ask the Civil Lord why over 400 men have been discharged from Haulbowline Docks; and whether, if the docks are completed, it is the intention of the Government to get any naval constructive or repairing work done there?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, Sheffield, Ecclesall): No considerable number of men have been discharged from Haulbowline this year. Within the past two years most of the men on the Haulbowline extension works have been by degrees discharged, because the works were practically finished. The Government hope to utilize the docks from time to time as the Service may require; but there is no immediate intention of having work done there.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: May I ask the hon. Member if he can inform me what the machinery is that was paid for in the Estimates last year? Has it been put up; and, if put up, has it been kept in order so as to be useful for the exigencies of the State and of the Navy?

Mr. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I believe the only machinery was a pumping-engine. That was the only machinery included in the Estimates last year. The pumping is nearly finished, but there are some minor works.

GAS UNDERTAKINGS (OTHER THAN THOSE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Return ordered, "relating to all authorized Gas Undertakings in the United Kingdom other than those of Local Authorities for the year ended the 31st of December, 1888."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 97.]

GAS UNDERTAKINGS (LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Return ordered, "relating to all authorized Gas Undertakings in the United Kingdom belonging to Local Authorities for the year ended the 25th day of March, 1882.—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 98.]

MOTION.

TOWN COUNCILLORS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Esslemont, Bill to amend the Laws for the Laws for the Election of Town Councillors of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Esslemont, Mr. Edmund Robertson, Mr. Munro Ferguson, and Mr. Baird.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 177.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class I.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £36,379, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Buildings of the Houses of Parliament."

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): In the present Estimates there is a sum of £7,854 asked for in connection with the restoration of Westminster Hall. I see, on referring to Class 1, that the sum of £31,899 has been spent up to the end of last year; and a further sum of £3,447 up to the 31st of March, 1889, making a total of £35,346, or, together with the sum now asked for, a total of £43,200. As no provision is made for railings, or for laying down the inclosure around the new building, I presume that we shall be asked for a further sum on that account. Therefore, I think I am correct in saying that, before the work is completed, we shall have expended a sum more nearly approaching £50,000 than £40,000. Now, it appears to me that the Committee may approach the Vote to-day with a perfectly free and open mind. It is quite true that a Committee was appointed to consider the question in 1884; that it presented a Report; and that in July, 1885, a discussion took place in this House upon that Report. But, in the first place, the Committee was appointed under very different circumstances from those which now exist. I wish to disclaim most emphatically that this Vote has any connection with the side of the House on which I now sit; and if I were sitting on the other side of the House, supporting Her Majesty's Government, I should object to it in precisely the same way. Indeed, I believe that the Amendment I propose to move will have the support of many Members on the other side of the House. There is no Party feeling whatever in the matter, but the simple question is, whether we approve of the works which are now being carried out, and particularly to one portion of them, to which I shall allude before I sit down. I would like the Committee to look a little closer to this Select Committee and its Report. It was appointed in 1884, and consisted of 13 Members, most of them of high position. The terms of the reference were "to examine and report upon plans for the restoration of the exterior of Westminster Hall." I lay considerable stress upon the word "exterior." There was laid before the Committee a scheme which, it was suggested, would cost £35,300; but that included the addition of two corner towers at the north end of the Hall, which proposal was apparently even too strong for the stomach of the Committee. It was therefore, ruthlessly cut out, and left a sum of £26,500 as the estimated cost of the works which the Committee approved of. As the works are likely to cost £50,000, it is not too much to say that they will exceed the Estimate by nearly 100 per cent. The expenditure up to Saturday last was £35,336; we are to-day asked to vote £7,854 or £43,190 against £26,500, without the sum that will be necessary to complete the inclosures and railings. The proceedings of the Committee were very interesting, and occupy a considerable volume. The Committee wound up their Report with the observation that "this is a most difficult subject." I can only wish that the Committee and the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), who was mainly responsible for it, had proceeded a little more judiciously in what they admitted to be a difficult subject. The Vote came on for discussion in this House on the 15th of July, 1885, and it underwent considerable criticism. It was pointed out that the money obtained in August, 1884, was asked for under a certain plea, and that it had not been applied to the purpose for which it was asked—namely, strengthening and preserving from the weather the flying buttresses. In the course of the discussion the right hon. Member for Bradford made use of one or two curious expressions. He said that he had found it not easy to act as Chairman of the Committee and as First Commissioner of Works at the same time, and that, on the whole, he had felt bound to stand by the Architect. Therefore we may take it that as Chairman of the Committee he acted as counsellor, guide, and friend of the principal witness, and that he did not possess that impartial mind, as Chairman of the Committee, which was to have been expected. To a certain extent he acted as Mr. Pearson's advocate before the Committee. Delay was pleaded for. It was pointed out that it was a moribund House of Commons, that a General Election was imminent, and that it was not desirable to do more than keep the flying buttresses from damage—that there was no necessity for hurrying the scheme through the House of Commons. These arguments did not prevail, and what occurred then may occur again this afternoon. Hon. Members who had not heard the discussion came into the House when the division bell was rung, and gave their votes without being cognizant of the merits of the case. The Vote was carried, and I should like to ask what the public have got for this expenditure—something like £40,000. I will not criticize the outside architectural features of the scheme; but inside we have got a few rooms ill-lighted, badly approached, and too far off—altogether a most inconvenient arrangement for those who are engaged in the business of this House. So far as the upper rooms are concerned, they are worth little or nothing, and upon the basement there are only three or four cellars. I cannot conceive an arrangement more exposed to ridicule. There is a covered space for horses, but it is approached by a declivity, which it is dangerous to drive a horse down. But, leaving the cost of the building and the want of arrangement, my specific ground of objection is the work inside Westminster Hall. The Committee were appointed to examine and report upon plans for the restoration of the exterior of Westminster Hall. If it could have been foreseen that such a structure would have been erected in the middle of Westminster Hall, I do not think the money would have been granted in July, 1885, so readily. It is quite evident that the matter of these steps was present in the minds of the Select Committee, and to show this I will read some of the questions put by the Chairman of the Committee to Mr. Pearson, together with Mr. Pearson's answers. Mr. Pearson was asked—

> (Question 157.)—"How do you propose to give access to these rooms?—By staircases from the Hall. (Question 158)—Is that following the original plan?—The original plan at this end (pointing to it), and a second flight of steps leading up from the south of the Hall; and then an additional flight of steps towards the centre, somewhat similar to the steps which existed before in the Hall, as may be seen in one of the old views.
>
> "159. Would those steps be any detriment to the Hall itself?—None whatever.
>
> "160. Supposing exception were taken to those steps, would it be possible to give access to those rooms in the ante-rooms shown in the plan of the lower story?—Certainly; it would sacrifice some portion of the upper floor. The Conference Room here (pointing to it) would have to be diminished in size.
>
> "161. It would necessitate some little rearrangement of the upper floor?—Yes.
>
> "162. But if it were thought objectionable to let the staircases be steps in the Hall, access could easily be obtained in the manner I have suggested?—Yes; steps existed as shown in No 22. A flight of steps is shown here."

Certainly "steps," but not anything like what Mr. Pearson has put in Westminster Hall. Mr. Pearson admitted that there would be no difficulty in avoiding these steps in Westminster Hall, and the effect of his examination was that they were not necessary in order to give access to these rooms. But a good deal more occurred in reference to the steps than that. When the matter came on for discussion in this House on the 15th of July, 1885, the Chairman of the Committee said (*Hansard*, Vol. 299, page 826)—

> "It has been objected by the hon. Member that the access to these rooms would partly be by stone staircases in the corners of Westminster Hall, 10 feet in height. That is undoubtedly how access was given to them in former times. It was my intention, if I had remained in charge of the Office of Works, to try by a model how these would look, and whether they

would interfere with the appearance of Westminster Hall. In the opinion of Mr. Pearson, they would not detract from the appearance of the Hall. If, however, it should turn out that that was not so, and that the effect was bad, it would be quite possible to place the steps in the lower part of the Gallery by sacrificing a part of the space there, and in this way, I think, the objections of the hon. Gentleman would be completely met."

That I regard as one of the suggestions which we often see thrown out from the Treasury Bench to soothe the mind of the objectors to a particular Vote, and I have no doubt that this was a suggestion made with that object. The effect of it was that the objection to the steps was allowed to sleep; the Vote was obtained, and hoardings put up, so that it was impossible to see what was taking place behind them. Now that the hoardings have been taken down, we see the structure exposed, in all its hideous deformity, entirely destroying the vista down the Hall. I believe it is quite impossible to show that there was anything like it in bygone days. I have been to the British Museum, and although the representations of the Hall do not go back very far, there is nothing like these steps to be found in any old print. This is a matter for which I hold no Party responsible, but it is a matter for the Committee to take into their own hands and deal with as they think fit. The historic glories of this old Hall are or ought to be dear to every Member of this House. I say unhesitatingly that these erections mar the grand and severe lines of one of the noblest halls in this country. I ask the Committee to support the Motion I now make, that this Vote be reduced by the sum of £500 as a protest against what I cannot help characterizing as a ruthless act of Vandalism.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item B, £7,854, for the Restoration of Westminster Hall, be reduced by £500."—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I was First Commissioner of Works at the time Mr. Pearson was employed in the work of restoring Westminster Hall, and as I acted as Chairman of the Committee which my hon. Friend has frequently adverted to, I think the Committee will not be surprised if I take up at once the challenge of my hon. Friend. My hon. Friend has alluded to the Report of the Committee, and to my action as Chairman of it. I do not propose to detain the Committee at any length upon this somewhat stale subject, but I am quite prepared to defend my conduct. As First Commissioner of Works, I found it necessary to defend Mr. Pearson from what I considered at the time to be an unfair attack from a small clique of professional men, who had determined to destroy his scheme if they could. It is not necessary to go into all the matters which were brought before the Committee, but simply to ascertain whether on the whole the results of our action were satisfactory. The hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division (Mr. J. Ellis) says that the upper rooms of the new building are ill-lighted, badly approached, and too far off. I take issue with him on all of those points. I say that they are not ill lighted nor badly approached. Each has a separate approach, and it is not the fact that they only communicate with one another. Each has a separate communication with the Hall. They are not ill lighted, and the building at right angles with the Hall is one of the most noble rooms to be found in London. My hon. Friend says they are worth very little; but it appears to me that they are extremely valuable rooms. I have no doubt that great use will be found for them, and that they will free other rooms in this House which may be dedicated to hon. Members in other respects. My hon. Friend went on to refer to the staircases, and I presume that they form the main object which has induced him to move the reduction of the Vote to-day. He has truly said that the question of the staircases was a subject of long discussion both in the Committee and in this House. Mr. Pearson's idea was that he was restoring the building on the west front of Westminster Hall as nearly as possible to the condition which he believed to exist from the time of Richard II. to a comparatively recent period. Unquestionably, rooms similar to those now re-built existed in former times, and were approached by staircases from the Hall. The hon. Member has thrown some doubt upon the fact, and says that in his opinion they never had any direct communication with Westminster Hall itself. But in the north staircase an old archway can be pointed out which shows that all the rooms communicated with the Hall in the manner they do now. My hon. Friend has referred to the statement which I made when the Report of the Select Committee was discussed in this House that I had intended, had I remained First Commissioner, to put up models of the proposed staircases, so that the public might judge of the effect of them. That was undoubtedly the fact. Now, I never set up to be a great authority on matters of taste, and I have always been anxious on such matters to take the opinion of the public outside as far as I can, and, probably, hon. Members will recollect that when the plans for the restoration of Westminster Hall were originally made, I had a model made of the exterior of the new building, so that Members might be able to judge the effect for themselves. So far as the staircases are concerned, notwithstanding all that the hon. Member has said, I maintain that they are no detriment whatever to the existing Hall. On matters of taste it is advisable that the House should be guided by the best authority of the day, and I can give authorities, which will be recognized as very high authorities, for the statement I have just made. I do not wish to force my judgment on the House, I prefer rather to quote the opinions of four men who will be recognized by hon. Members to be the highest authorities on this subject, Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Christian, Mr. Blomfield and Professor Brooks. I have had communications from all four gentlemen on the subject of the final design of the new buildings on the side of Westminster Hall, and especially on the point of the staircases. The first of the four opinions to which I shall refer is, I think, the most important. It is that of a gentleman who had very grave doubts indeed on the subject of the staircases before they were erected. Mr. Christian had told me that now he is able to judge the general effect of the staircases; his opinion is entirely different to what it was before. He says—

> "As regards the interior of the Hall and the new staircases, I am thankful to say that the dread with which I at one time looked forward to their introduction has been entirely dissipated by what I have seen to-day. The north and south staircases are admirably managed, and the views of the roof of the Hall from the landing of the former, and of St. Stephen's Hall from a similar position on the latter would alone compensate for any obstruction if there were any such to defend. They are really to an architect's eye quite charming. The central staircase and the arch beneath it giving access to the lower series of rooms are designed in the true spirit of a mediæval mason. The outside parapets and the pedestals may be, and I think are, open to criticism in respect of details, but the main features are really admirable. . . . . You are, I presume, aware that the northern staircase gives access to the upper series of rooms by an ancient doorway admirably restored, and completed by Pearson, without disturbing the inner ring of the arch which gives clear and strong evidence to the truthfulness of his theory of restoration."

Mr. Waterhouse writes—

> "The staircases leading from the Hall are very well contrived, not taking up much room, and yet by their variety adding interest and scale to that side of the Hall. The only doubt I have is as regards the central staircase, and that is with reference to the four pedestals terminating the side walls of the court flights. They appear to me too high and unnecessarily interfere with the view of the beautiful arch supporting the upper flights. The staircases would, in my opinion, have been well worth building if only for the new and unexpected views they afford of the Hall itself. The northern one has utilised the freshly discovered Early English doorway, and enables the spectator to see the Hall from probably the most favourable point of view. The central one allows of the examination of the details of the roof in a way impossible from below; while the southern staircase carries one into a corner of the Hall from whence is a fascinating view of the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall.

Professor Brooks said—

> "Never before have I seen the Great Hall look so well. For some cause it looked much larger; this I consider arises from the staircases, which project into the Hall and thereby break up the large surface of the west wall and give a scale to the building it so much required. So successfully have these staircases been designed they form good approaches to rooms, they give scale to the building, and they do not intrude too much into or obstruct the circulation in the Hall. From the landing of these staircases most charming views can be obtained of the Hall itself and of the finest timber roof in England. Such views were never obtainable before."

Mr. Blomfield said—

> "The interior of the Hall has certainly been materially improved by the change. The west wall was formerly disfigured by six enormous doorways, which detracted very much from the scale and proportions of the building, and had altogether a most disagreeable effect. The new doorways and staircases have quite remedied this defect, and to my mind form very interesting and pleasing features on that side of the Hall."

I said I did not intend to put myself

forward as an authority on these matters, but having got such judges as I could, and having looked at the whole work effected by Mr. Pearson, I can but conclude that it has been carried out with very great success. I can see no defect whatever, and I would ask hon. Members who entertain any doubts to reserve their final judgment until the work is completed, and they can judge of it as a whole, which is the only way to arrive at a fair judgment. It is not quite fair to the architect that it should be judged in its incomplete state.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman pardon me for interrupting him? Is there any more work to be done in Westminster Hall?

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: No, I think not.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: Then we can judge the effect of the alterations there.

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: It is hardly fair to condemn Mr. Pearson on a single piece of his work before the whole results of his building can be seen. I do not think it would be quite fair to the architect to come to a final judgment on the subject, yet I wish I might venture to detain the House with an opinion on the general effect of the restoration. All the Reports I have quoted speak in enthusiastic terms of the way in which the work has been carried out, and of the building as a whole, and Mr. Christian especially says—

> "I cannot but think that the throwing open of the Great Hall, and the clothing of its base with massive buildings, thoroughly harmonious with the old work, but greatly adding to its strength and power as a grand architectural feature, is one of the most successful works of modern times. It is to me a very real satisfaction to look upon it, and I trust most sincerely that in the enclosure of the ground outside nothing will be done that can in any way mar the grand simplicity of a picture which, when completed, ought to be one of the very finest to be seen in London."

Mr. Waterhouse also refers in the same terms to the general result of the work. I have only again to ask the House not to come to a final judgment on this question: it is only fair to the architect that time should be given for the completion of it as a whole. I may venture to express my regret that no money has been taken in the Estimates for the present year for completing the approaches, laying out the ground, and putting railings in front of the enclosure. It is hardly fair to the architect, when the work is practically complete, that it should still be surrounded by hoarding for twelve months, and that no opportunity should be afforded to the public of viewing the building. I can only conclude by saying that, in my judgment, Mr. Pearson has carried out a work of the greatest difficulty in a most satisfactory manner, and I believe the verdict of the architectural world is decisively in favour of what he has done. I regard it as a worthy completion of Westminster Hall, and a work which will be an honour and dignity to this part of London.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): The right hon. Gentleman has said a great deal about the feelings of the architect, but surely there is something to be said for the feelings of the British taxpayer, and for the way in which he is tyrannized over by artists and architects. I think, indeed, the greatest tyranny, and the most injurious tyranny, that we have to put up with is that which comes from the architect. He makes buildings which we not only have to pay for, but which we have to live in, and which affect the comfort of our lives for all time to come. It seems to me that it is a terrible misfortune to the country that architects look, as a rule, not to the convenience of the public, but seek to gain their artistic end, and in 99 cases out of 100 design buildings which are not suitable for the purposes for which they are intended. We have only to look for an instance of that to the new Law Courts, for which we paid so large a sum of money, and which have turned out to be so singularly ill-adapted to the purposes for which they are intended. Not only is the architecture bad, but the work was ill-done. The roofs have shrunk and are in danger. I think we have been grossly led astray by the architect, with regard to the work he has done to the exterior of Westminster Hall. Indeed, I fear the thing is now past praying for. I think a great deal of money has been spent uselessly, for the only result, so far as I can see, is that a number of wretched rooms have been erected, and those rooms are good for no practical purpose whatever. There might have been built a really magnificent room, if only the architect had gone the right way to work. We were prevented from having any knowledge of what was going on by the erection of hoardings around the works, and I believe that if the House had had an opportunity of judging what was proposed, the architect would not have been allowed under the cover of the hoarding to erect a hideous staircase. I am a modest man, but if I pride myself on anything it is that I have a sober mind, and am not carried away by passion. I am not architecturally or morally drunk. I have, I repeat, a sober mind in matters relating to art, and the result of what I have seen has been to convince me that matters of high art are all bosh and humbug. I do admire the interior of Westminster Hall; I believe it is the finest Hall in Europe, or at least it was before those awful stairs were put in. I also believe that the exterior of Westminster Hall was never meant to be otherwise than simple, for the reason that it was surrounded by the kitchens of Royal Palaces, and could not be seen to advantage. I join with my hon. Friend in being shocked and disgusted with the way in which the Hall has been treated. The steps which have been put in are not only ridiculously out of harmony with the rest of the building, but they are altogether out of proportion, and we find they are intended for no possible use whatever but to give access to those wretched, little, miserable rooms, for which even the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford can find no use whatever. I hope the Members of this House will exercise their common sense, will put a stop to these proceedings, and will have the stairs removed, and, I therefore heartily support my hon. Friend, and certainly decline for myself to be tyrannized over by architects.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I had hoped, Sir, that the First Commissioner of Works would have followed the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford in this debate, and have given the Committee his views in regard to this matter. Since he has not done so, I desire now, Sir, to state the reasons which induce me to support the Amendment. I am afraid the House is now committed to this expenditure, and that it is of no use trying to overthrow it. But when I was a Member of the Committee dealing with this question I expressed an opinion that if the First Commissioner of Works employed Mr. Pearson he would be pretty sure to find himself in a mess, because Mr. Pearson and his school did not follow the ideas of the old masters. We have now seen the result of Mr. Pearson's work. These are, no doubt, all questions of taste; but my doctrine has always been to follow the old masters, because they were right. Mr. Pearson and his school, of course, thought that the ideas which they adopted were better than those of the old masters, and they acted accordingly. My opinion was that either the magnificent designs of Sir Charles Barry should be completed or the matter should be let alone until a future time. Instead of that the right hon. Gentleman decided to employ Mr. Pearson. With regard to the outside of Westminster Hall, we are committed to the works there. We protested against them in 1885, but we were overruled, and now we must make the best we can of the buildings. But the inside of the Hall is an entirely new question. I do not believe that the designs for the steps were ever submitted to the Committee, and there is no evidence to show that they were. The plan is nothing but a mere ground plan, and there is nothing in it to show this large erection, which, so far as I can see, is a copy of the pulpit used by Mr. Spurgeon. Then there is another great defect about the alterations in Westminster Hall, and that is their want of symmetry. I should like to know why the doorway was not made exactly opposite to the entrance to St. Stephen's cloister. Then again there is the roughness of the western wall; I think it is most unsightly and that it destroys the whole harmony of the southern end of Westminster Hall. There is another defect in this new arrangement. One idea of the class of architects to which Mr. Pearson belongs seems to be that you must not have anything smooth and sightly to the eye, but that you must go back to some barbarous period, and that you must make everything rough and unsightly.

Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Does the right hon. Gentleman refer to the interior or the exterior wall?

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: I refer to the exterior wall between these famous staircases. The new architect has roughened the whole face of the western wall, and it presents a very unsightly appearance. No doubt the architects have been filled with the idea that they were going to put something there which was there originally, but there is nothing to show that Mr. Pearson's restoration is anything but the creation of his own mind. I do not think that the authorities who have been quoted in support of this work are such as the Committee ought to follow. No one who can put two and two together will fail to see that the staircases will interfere with the whole idea of the Hall. The Champions of England were accustomed in former days to ride into the Hall; if the Champions of England rode into it now I think it would be difficult for them to get out on the other side. The staircases are nothing but obstructions, and are not necessary even for the purpose of obtaining access to the small door at the end. Then there is a parapet at the end which I hope will be removed. My reason for voting for the Amendment is that these particular staircases, and the alterations, on the whole, have never been sanctioned by the Committee, and are, therefore, open to the decision of the House upon them, and we shall be quite justified in reducing the Vote to show our sense of the wrong that has been done to Westminster Hall.

*Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I cordially support the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. J. E. Ellis). I think we can very freely express our deep regret that the present Chief Commissioner (Mr. Plunket) did not in 1885 accept the advice given to him in this House not to hastily adopt Mr. Pearson's proposals. The grumbling we hear to-day would not, I think, have been heard if the right hon. Gentleman had not been too anxious, I think, through courtesy, to adopt the plans of his right hon. Predecessor in office (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). I think, Mr. Courtney, you yourself stated pretty clearly what would happen if this new building was erected. You said the outer rooms would be nothing but cellars, to which people would have to descend from Westminster Hall by means of a flight of steps, that the inner portion of the Hall would be more or less disfigured, and that the outside building would serve no possible purpose but that of darkening the interior of the Hall. The right hon. Gentleman Mr. Shaw Lefevre has talked a good deal about style and about architects, but what I said in 1885 I say now, namely, that he has thought more about style than utility. What we need is to have some useful building erected in order that the business of Parliament may be more conveniently conducted. The right hon. Gentleman appears to have given no instructions at all to Mr. Pearson as to the requirements of the House. He merely instructed him to prepare plans which he approved, and got the Government of the day to approve, and then had them referred to a Select Committee with an altogether insufficient reference. Even to-day the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) has no idea as to what use the rooms are to be applied. The Select Committee state in their Report that when they commenced their inquiry the only plans before them were those of Mr. Pearson. I hope even to-day that we shall have some declaration from the First Commissioner that the very ugly steps which everybody disapproves of will be removed, and I think we must also ask him to state for what purpose the rooms are going to be used. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) says that there is a separate entrance to every room, but in order to get to the separate entrance you have to pass through other rooms.

*Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that you can approach every room through Westminster Hall without passing through other rooms.

*Mr. CAUSTON: Well, I went there to-day with an hon. Friend, and I have been there before, and I certainly think that you cannot do so. I have protested before against these plans, and I protest again. I only hope that the First Commissioner of Works will be able to say something that will cheer us up on the subject.

*Mr. de LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I hope the Committee will allow me to give my reasons why I cannot support this Amendment. I take very great interest in Westminster Hall, and if it were possible to have reconsidered the whole question and to have carried out Sir Chas. Barry's plan, I think it would have been wise to do so. That is an impossibility as things now are, and I think it is a great misfortune that when something is being done with the authority of this House, and is approaching completion, an attempt should be made to undo what has been done. I have no doubt that if any mediæval architect had had to put these steps into the Hall, he would have placed them symmetrically opposite the entrance to this House. The modern idea that eccentricity is a great feature of mediæval architecture is an ill-founded one. Whenever symmetry is departed from in such architecture, it is done from necessity and not from choice. I think that the general effect of Westminster Hall has not been damaged by the additions which have been made to it. With regard to the roughening of the wall, I hold that the treating of the wall in that manner gives a pretty variation of light and shade and is much superior to leaving it smooth. I cannot vote for this Amendment because I earnestly desire to see Westminster Hall completed. When it is completed it will then, I think, be time to consider whether any alterations should be made in it. I think the great window on the north side, which looks as bare and cold as possible, ought to be filled with stained glass. My right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works has informed me that the cost of filling it with stained glass would not exceed £1,200, and I do hope that next year, if the right hon. Gentleman has the courage to put this down in the Estimates, he will ask Parliament to grant that sum. It might be made a window commemorative of Her Majesty's Jubilee, and I would suggest that the arms of Her Majesty and of all the Sovereigns who came to take part in the Jubilee Service should figure in it. There are other windows also which need a little colour so as to brighten up the Hall. The shields also running round the Hall were at one time resplendent with gold and colour, as were also the shields borne by the carved angels in the roof. It would not cost much to repaint and re-gild them so as to give a bright line of colour round the Hall. I think also the glass panels in the north door of the Hall might be filled in so as to make the door all solid wood work. You would then have the grand effect of a dark dado running round the Hall, and the splendour and dignity of the building would be much increased. If I might make a few remarks about the great Central Lobby, it seems to me it would be a good thing if the statues of Lord Iddesleigh and Lord John Russell were moved into Westminster Hall. At present they are completely out of place, because a different standard of symmetry is given by the statuary in the mouldings leading up to the groinings, which gives a scale of elegance and dignity to the Central Hall unequalled by any other hall in Europe. They might, at present, stand at the top of the first flight of steps. I am sure that the public are anxious to see this building, which is essentially the people's palace, completed, and I hope that the Representatives of the people will endeavour to bring about this result. I hope the task will not be approached in a niggardly manner, and that this palace which is the glory of our nation, will be properly completed.

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I cannot say I agree with the criticism of my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) that the high art of this century is all bosh and humbug, but I must say that, if the present interior of Westminster Hall is an example of the high art of this 19th century, I should be very much of the opinion of my hon. Friend as to the value of that art. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) urged that we should reserve our opinions on this subject, but my right hon. Friend subsequently admitted that the interior of the Hall was practically completed, and it is to the interior of the Hall that we specially object. What we chiefly complain of is, this staircase, which I regard as nothing less than hideous, and also the blank space on the south-west of the Hall which balances so ill the iron screen on the opposite side, and is altogether a perfect eyesore. I do not set myself up as a judge of taste, but I know what I think is ugly and I know what I think is pretty; I am not going to be guided, therefore, in a matter of this kind by any number of architects or any amount of architects' opinions. I am certain that if hon. Gentlemen had been able to see how hideous the present interior of Westminster Hall was going to be, they would have done everything they could when the plans were under discussion to prevent their adoption. I shall certainly support the Amendment.

*DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W): I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) that the Committee which sat on this subject was a good one, and certainly one member of it had a kind of prophetic insight into what was to happen. The only Gentleman who really understood the plans, namely, Mr. Dick Peddie, predicted very accurately a great many of the grave defects which would be found in this building. I think a study of the report of the Committee throws a lurid light upon what was stated by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford, namely, that we should subordinate our own tastes and feelings entirely to the tastes and opinions of architects. When we invite the opinion of experts we find them hopelessly at variance; some will be one side, and as many on the other side; and so we find in this instance first-rate architects on one side and on the other. But what struck me in regard to the opinions of those Gentlemen quoted by the right hon. Member for Bradford (Mr. ShawLefevre) was—if I may use an expression, which I hope is not un-Parliamentary—that they damned the work with very faint praise. Everyone had some amount of qualification of his commendation; the steps were good, but—something else was wrong. This only bears out my view that you may find experts on both sides of any question of this kind. I should like to know whether an attempt has been made to get the opinion of any other architects, for I feel sure that we should not want the support of professional opinion to our view that these steps are an outrage to one of the finest old halls in the world. I am not going to take the sweeping line taken by some hon. Members who have spoken, for I am of opinion that the outside work on Westminster Hall is good in design and thoroughly in harmony with the rest of the building. So far as my judgment goes, Mr. Pearson has there been quite successful, but, when we get inside, my favourable opinion ceases. Any common-sense man familiar with the appearance of the Hall will agree that the stairs are not beautiful in themselves, and placed as they are, they break up the fine majestic sweep of that side of the Hall and spoil the grand simplicity of the whole. I confess I have been unable to find the separate entrances for the rooms, and I wish the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) would organize a personally conducted tour and explain this to us. I was there to-day, and I could find no trace of such things. As Mr. Dick-Peddie said long ago, the arrangement is inconvenient if there should be anything like a crowd entering these rooms, and the rooms will be subject to unpleasant odours from below. I do not know what the rooms are meant for, but I suppose for the use of Members of Parliament. If that is so, if Members are likely to be there at all, you must have some machinery by which they may have an intimation of a division in the House, and it is hardly possible to get from those rooms in time to take part in a division without running, an exercise for which the habits and physical conformation of many Members are ill-adapted. Even now, it is difficult to get from the Committee Rooms upstairs to this House in time when a division is called. We sometimes hear of fatal consequences to elderly gentlemen from running to catch trains, and I suppose if something of the kind happens to some of us, something will be done to obviate the necessity of proceeding at a headlong pace. It strikes me, looking at the new rooms, that the old Law Courts might as well have been saved. I remember, too, the staircases were unobtrusive and something like the staircases of old times, no more obtrusive and no more interfered with the architectural appearance of the Hall than the old orange woman who kept her stall in the corner. To compare these clumsy stairs to the light flight of stairs that led up to those picturesque doorways, as I remember they were, is an outrage on common sense. It is a great pity, I think, the old Law Courts were not kept; they were quite as convenient as rooms, the architecture was not much worse, and preserving them would have saved a large sum of money. I shall give my support to the Motion of my hon. Friend.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): We adopted the usual course in regard to our public buildings. We left the matter to the Chief Commissioner and a professional architect, and they have made a thorough mess of it. There was an idea, I believe, when at considerable expense a number of rooms were provided, that they would be so many extra Committee rooms. Now, we have to come to the conclusion that they will not be used for Committee rooms, nor do I see how they could be, seeing that they open one into the other. ["No!"]

*Mr. CAUSTON: Will the hon. Member allow me to correct the statement I made just now, that to go to one room you must pass through another? That would be so if you went up the centre staircase, but I find this can be avoided by descending the centre staircase, and ascending others at each end of the Hall; and as regards the basement, I find that there is a hole on the ground floor, that, if not filled up, can be made the means of access from outside the building to the corner room.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The real facts are, there is no present intention to use these as Committee Rooms, for you cannot pass from one to the other without coming down one staircase into Westminster Hall and ascending another, a most inconvenient arrangement, more especially when witnesses and counsel and agents are required to attend to matters in more than one room. The only possible use to which I can see the rooms can be put is to use them as a sort of prison for those Members who happen to offend the House, and who, if now imprisoned by way of punishment, are sent to the Clock Tower, to the great injury to their health from the noise of the clock. We have built the rooms at considerable expenditure of money, but I do not suppose we are prepared to pull them down again, but with these staircases it is a different thing. They are a great eyesore. So far as I know, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford and the architects he has mentioned are the only people who admire them. There is a consensus of opinion that these staircases ought to come away, and the simple course is to take them away; we can get into the rooms without them by putting a staircase in the little room leading up to these Committee Rooms. It is too late to argue about the rooms, but at least these objectionable stairs might be taken away.

*The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): I must ask the Committee to bear with me while I endeavour to deal with the many arguments addressed to me on this matter of the restoration of Westminster Hall by Mr. Pearson. I notice, in the first place, that whereas the criticisms a few years ago were very loud and very uncompromising as regards the effect which would be produced by proposed additions to the exterior of the Hall, on the present occasion those criticisms have hardly been heard at all. I think I may say, having been in communication with many people on the subject inside and outside the House of Commons, that, at last, there is an almost universal consensus of opinion as to the excellence of Mr. Pearson's work, on the outside at all events, and as to his having made a substantial and handsome addition to the general appearance of the old Hall. The Committee are, no doubt, aware there was a necessity for some such work being done in order to preserve the walls, the roof, and the flying buttresses, which were in a state which caused considerable anxiety, and I may say at once that the main reason why it became necessary to make a considerable addition to the Estimate formerly before the House was that, when the matter came to be examined, it was found that the flying buttresses were in a much more advanced stage of decay than had been supposed, and it was found essential to renew the old work to a greater extent than had been anticipated. That, I think, further shows the urgent necessity there was for taking the work in hand if the old Hall was to be preserved at all. Another reason for increasing the Estimate is that a very elaborate and complete system of ventilation has been provided under the directions of our distinguished adviser, Dr. Percy, for the new buildings, and it was found necessary, in order to meet the requirements in this respect to give further support to the walls and flying buttresses. This accounts for the greater part of the increase in the Estimate. And now let me say a word or two about the staircases. Of course, after all, it is a matter of taste, but so far as I have been able to judge there is nothing like such a universal consensus of opinion as the hon. Member for

Northampton says against these staircases. There are some people who say they do not make much difference, and others, notably the distinguished architects to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred to-day—and many others speak to the same effect—declare that they add greatly to the beauty of the Hall. One thing is certain, that any person who walks up the centre staircase and looks around will get a much better view of the Hall than he can get from any other part of the building, except, perhaps, from the wide flight of steps at the end of the Hall. However, this is a matter of taste, and I am not anxious, dogmatically, to press my own opinion, but I think that any Member of the Committee who is not an architect will probably agree with me that he has seldom seen a change made in any old building which did not at first produce on him the effect of a surprise, if not of a shock, but that having got over the surprise of the change, he will some times come to the opinion that the result did, after all, justify the change. But I do not press that view too far. It is, I repeat, a matter of taste. And let me say in passing that when one has to stand the criticisms differing so widely as those of my right hon. Friend the Member for Whitehaven, who has devoted much study to the old masters, and is always ready with a particular affirmative, and the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, whose judgment on art results is a universal negative, and who would study utility alone, it must be admitted that any Chief Commissioner will always have a considerable number of assailants in reference to the carrying out of any architect's plan. I have myself little doubt that if the steps were removed and other steps were put in their place, or if no steps at all were erected, there would be another cloud of witnesses to raise objections to the new arrangement. I had best, I think, under these circumstances, fall back upon the strong Committee which reported in 1885 on these plans after going fully into the subject. That Committee had before them the architect and his plans, and its members had every opportunity of cross-examining him and ventilating their own views. I must remind hon. Members that the Committee of 1885, after going into the matter most carefully, and occupying sitting after sitting during several months, ultimately carried the report upon which the architectural work has been based by majorities of seven or eight to two or three in every important division. Then it is said these plans were never before the Committee at all, but there I say hon. Members are entirely mistaken. Not only had they these plans, 5A and 6A, in which the three staircases are plainly shown, but they had No. 8, which gives a section of the staircase at the northern end of the Hall.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: Only a sectional elevation.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I am speaking of that. It is shown as a sectional elevation of the northern end of the Hall. I admit that the double staircase in the middle of the Hall is not shown.

Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: Hear, hear!

*Mr. PLUNKET: But that is merely a duplication of the staircase at the north end of the Hall. All its characteristics will be found in the elevation given, and there was, as I have already stated, before the Committee a ground plan of what was to be done, in which the three staircases were plainly shown. It is not, therefore, a true representation to say that these staircases were not before the Committee, and they are necessary for access to the upper rooms. The hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division asks why I did not disclose to the House of Commons and the public the deed of darkness which was being done behind the wooden screen. I was not very long First Commissioner of Works after the debate on this subject in 1885, but when I returned to the office I was asked a question on the 20th of September, 1886, about two of these flights of stairs, and my answer was certainly no *suppressio veri*. I stated that—

> The scheme which has been sanctioned by the House includes the erection of two open flights of steps, having projections, not of 23 feet and 15 feet respectively (as stated in the question), but of 20 feet 6 inches and 9 feet 6 inches respectively. Flights of steps fulfilling the same object as those now proposed, and occupying very similar positions, have existed in Westminster Hall very nearly throughout its whole history."

And then I went on to explain that Mr. Pearson's plan was a modern reproduction of what existed in ancient times.

I spoke of two staircases, the question addressed to me having reference to two staircases only, and I only cite this answer to show that I fully explained to the House what was going on behind the mysterious screen. What the House is really interested, I think, to know, however, is what use is to be made of the rooms we have thus acquired. Some such buildings were necessary for preserving the old Hall from ruin; but I think they might be made extremely useful. I entirely differ from the estimate which has been formed of the rooms by some hon. Members. They have more light than the rooms in which many of the officers of this House have to sit every day. One is a very large and handsome room, and, even if not large enough for a Grand Committee, it would do for a Committee of very considerable size. The other rooms, I venture to think, could be turned to better account than as Committee Rooms. My idea is, in the first place, to transfer into those rooms, which are certainly at an inconvenient distance from the House for Members wishing to attend Divisions, the Private Bill Office, at present running along the side of St. Stephen's Hall. The clerks of that office would not complain of the difficulty of access to the rooms, for, instead of having only one access, as they have to their present rooms, they would have five. I would also suggest that it would be well to transfer the officers of the Journal Office, who have rooms facing on to the terrace, to these new rooms, which are quite as large and as well ventilated and lighted as those they now occupy. There is no doubt that the accommodation at present in the House for interviewing strangers and deputations is extremely small, and my idea is that the room along the side of St. Stephen's Hall would be a very convenient place for Members to meet deputations and to see strangers or their private secretaries. With respect to the rooms facing on the terrace, it has often been represented to me that more smoking accommodation is desirable, and I propose, therefore, to convert one of these rooms into a second smoking room. I do not bring forward these ideas dogmatically, and I would be glad of suggestions from hon. Members as to the disposal of the rooms. But it is, I believe, a sound principle to utilize the new rooms for the officers of the House, whose immediate closeness to the House itself is not essential, and to take advantage of the rooms which they now occupy for the greater comfort and convenience of Members themselves. On the whole, I can see no reason for taking a step so strong as that of abolishing the staircases. Let hon. Members give them a fair trial, and see what the general opinion will be. I am in favour of opening Westminster Hall to the public if the Home Secretary comes to the conclusion, as I have reason to hope he will, that it is possible again to do so.

*Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his explanation. I am sure we shall all be glad to know that these new rooms will be put to a reasonable, practical use. The object with which I move this reduction is to protest against the steps in Westminster Hall—I ask the judgment of the Committee simply and solely in regard to the work done inside the Hall.

*Mr. STORY-MASKELYNE (Wilts, Cricklade): One objection that has been made to the steps is that they destroy the symmetry of the Hall, and that Gothic architects always studied symmetry. The hon. Gentleman opposite who stated this half-truth forgot that the Gothic architect first considered what was wanted, and in carrying out what was necessary, studied symmetry if it was convenient, but, if not, defied it, and still built what was beautiful. No building could more aptly illustrate this than this historic Hall. The "central" doorway is not in the centre. Six windows flank it on one side, five on the other, and the buttresses and arches on the West side are unsymmetrical with the windows and with each other. No, Mr. Courtney, the thing is done, and the staircases are built, though not yet finished. They may look better then, and to alter them will cost a great deal more money, and probably at the further cost of convenience. I do not admire them, but I cannot say they are ugly. They are necessary, and as in Gothic architecture regard is always paid to the practical necessities of the case at as little sacrifice of beauty as possible, and as the steps are paid for, I think we had better keep them awhile and see how they chime in with the old building when they are finished. I shall certainly vote against the Amendment.

*MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): With regard to that part of the criticism which has been hurled at the head of Mr. Pearson, the architect, as to the stone used in the new work not having a smooth face, I would point out that if it had a smooth face it would be altogether out of character in the building. The stone referred to has what is technically called a tooled surface, and accords with the face of the stone used throughout the building.

*MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I wish to urge upon the Government the desirability of removing the closed up dormer windows on the eastern slope of the roof of Westminster Hall, and of completing the timbers of the roof in uniformity with the western slope. The alteration, I am informed, would not cost more than £750, and it is surely a disgrace to the nation that we cannot afford to retain and restore both slopes of the roof which is renowned throughout the world as the finest specimen of ancient timber work, the effect of which is completely destroyed at night when the hall is lighted up by these ugly holes in the eastern slope. I do hope the Government will next year ask for sufficient money to complete the roof at least, for the Plantagenet kings or ancient Abbots of Westminster would never have tolerated for six months such a miserable exhibition of national penury.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 129; Noes 230.—(Div. List, No. 59.)

Original Question again proposed.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: The first notice of Amendment I have on the Paper is rendered unnecessary by that we have just disposed of; but I will move my second Amendment as a protest against the excess asked for over the Estimate for the restoration of Westminster Hall, and as a protest against the lofty manner in which the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works replied to criticisms upon that excess. There is nothing more objectionable than this constant practice on the part of architects and engineers of giving us an estimate in the first instance, and then leading us into enormous excesses. There seems to me no excuse for excess in this case, the question having been for years before the House, and the architect having had every facility for perfecting his plans and completing his estimate on a reasonable basis. Whereas the original estimate for this work was some £26,000, the actual cost has been £43,000, and before the railings are finished the amount will probably rise to £50,000. If the architect is as capable and efficient a man as he is said to be, why did he not prepare a capable and honest estimate, and let us know at once the amount to be expended? I move to reduce the vote by £7,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item B, £7,854, for the Restoration of Westminster Hall, be reduced by £7,000."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

MR. W. G. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Penryn and Falmouth): I wish to ask my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner of Works whether any steps have been or are being taken to put the contract of this building under one authority? We have been told that the building is under the Lord Great Chamberlain, and that it is owing to that functionary that the Statue to the late Lord Iddesleigh has been put up in the central hall.

THE CHAIRMAN: The subject the right hon. Gentleman is going into is relative neither to the item under discussion nor to the reduction which has been moved.

*MR. ISAACS (Newington, Walworth): I was informed that the Vote last taken was on a Motion to reduce the salary of the architect by £200, to which I am opposed, and I wish most emphatically and decidedly to say that I went into the wrong Lobby. I cannot support the reduction of the Vote now proposed, for the work has been done, and as honest men we must pay for it; but I must say that I think the staircases very objectionable, and that the architect appears to have utterly failed to catch the spirit of the design of the Hall.

THE CHAIRMAN: That question has already been discussed.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I beg to move the reduction of the Vote under Item "C" by the sum of £500, and in doing so, if what I have to say is not new, the fault is not mine, but that of the First Commissioner of Works. For the last three years I have brought this question before the House, and I hope that the House will not this year turn a deaf ear to the prayer of the workmen, whose case I represent. I am sure that the First Commissioner of Works is not desirous of continuing to do them an injustice, and I hope that he has given to the subject the attention he promised me last year, as I think we are now entitled to a distinct promise that the system of which I complain, and under which the workmen are subjected to severe hardships, should be speedily terminated. The right hon. Gentleman promised to inquire. I want to know what is the result of his inquiry, and what is going to be done? I do not complain that new works or extensive alterations in connection with the Houses of Parliament should be executed by ordinary contract, but what I do protest against is the extraordinary system of contracting for human labour, and allowing some one to deduct from the wages of the men a considerable portion of the sum which we vote in this House year by year. I am told that this system has prevailed for some years, and that nobody knows how it came about. The present contractors are Messrs. Brass. Some of the workmen are contracted for at the rate of 5½d. per hour and others at the rate of 6½d.—very small sums; a great deal too small. But out of these sums, small as they are, the contractor is allowed to deduct 1d. per hour, so that the workmen only receive 4½d. and 5½d. The work itself is often of a dangerous character, as the men have frequently to mount ladders to clean and paint parts of the building 60 and 70 feet above the ground. That men so employed should be paid at so low a rate is little short of a public scandal. These men are also deprived of many advantages which the *employés* of the Board of Works enjoy. They work longer hours, they have no holidays except Easter, Whit Monday, and Christmas Day, and they are not allowed even a day's wages if, owing to indisposition, they are unable to work. Another evil is the confusion which arises from the dual control. One body of men are engaged by the Board of Works, and receive every farthing of the sum voted by this House, whereas the men whose cause I represent are not Government servants, but are under the control of the contractor. As the Government have a Clerk of Works here, I think it is most desirable that the whole of the *employés* should be under his control. The Clerk of the Works receives a salary of £250 or £300 a-year. I do not complain of that as an extravagant sum, but I do think that he ought to superintend the work of all the men who are employed about this building. No one seems to have troubled himself about the grievances of these poor workmen, or their troubles would have been ended long ago. Personally, I have a very deep sympathy for a class to which I have had the pleasure of belonging all my life. The present arrangement is that the contractor is supposed to supply certain plant and materials—such as steps, trestles, and ladders, and for that he is allowed to make these deductions. Surely the nation is wealthy enough to purchase its own plant and materials, so that the workmen shall receive the full rate of wages voted to them by this House? It is said that this is an economical arrangement; but, if so, why is it only applied to the poorer class of *employés* and not to the upper class officials who receive high salaries? Her Majesty's Government not long ago appointed a Committee to inquire into the Sweating System, but that system they themselves are guilty of encouraging by allowing work to be done at the Houses of Parliament and other public buildings in the manner I have indicated. Unless a satisfactory assurance is given that the system of which I complain shall be ended when the present contract expires, I shall be under the necessity of taking a Division, and I shall go on pegging away until the evil complained of is remedied. I move the reduction of the Vote by £500.

Motion made, and Question proposed "That Item C, £5,555, for Maintenance and Repairs, be reduced by £500."—(*Mr. Cremer.*)

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The matter may be a small one to Members of the House, but it is a very important one to the men concerned. There might be something to be said for the system if it applied to all the workmen employed about these buildings, but the House has a Clerk of the Works and other officials who could be charged with the duty of employing sweepers. The system adopted comes very near to sweating. The Government pay 5½d. an hour, but the workmen only receive 4½d. The contractor's profit of 1d. an hour has not to meet any expenses for tools or materials, because all these are provided at the expense of the House. It is computed that the contractor nets a profit of £250 a-year on the sweeping of the Houses of Parliament alone; and he has other contracts of a similar kind for the sweeping of public offices which cannot be discussed under this Vote. I do think that under our very noses we ought not to allow this system to prevail. When the Government pay 5½d. an hour it ought to see that the money goes into the pockets of the men who do the work. Then, again, we talk of long hours, yet here we have men employed from 6 in the morning until half past 5 in the evening—11 and a-half hours, or, deducting the dinner hour, ten hours. It is quite evident that the work is excessive, and the pay too low. I can quite understand that the contract already entered into must run out; but it may fairly be asked that such contracts shall not be entered into again, and that officials of the House should employ the labour required.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I wish to endorse the strong opinion which has been expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Haggerston (Mr. Cremer), and also his appeal to the First Commissioner to accede to his request. I confess that I was astounded when I first heard of the system under which the cleaning of this House is provided for. I could not believe it possible that while the majority of the officials connected with this House are engaged directly through the Office of Works or some other Government Department, a system of contracting for the cleaning at a low price should be tolerated, together with the principle of making deductions from the wages of the workmen. The contractor's profit on the labour of each man amounts to something like 4s. 6d. a week—a very large sum indeed—and it is most discreditable that such large deductions should be made from the wages of the unfortunate workmen. I do not think that the First Commissioner can possibly, for any length of time, refuse to listen to the appeal which my hon. Friend makes to him. I do hope that this House, at least, will set an example against anything which can be considered in the nature of sweating. We are not asking that a large sum of money shall be squandered, or that any extra charge whatever shall be incurred. If it is necessary to effect economy, it can be done by cutting down some of the higher salaries by a few hundreds. Let the doctrine of supply and demand be applied to all grades of the public service, and then something like real economy may be effected. No doubt these men stand in a different position from the workmen employed in other departments, and they will not compare favourably with men employed to do work of a similar character elsewhere. I do not think any hon. Member can give a reason why these men should be left in this condition, and why they should not be brought in direct contact with the Chief Commissioner.

Mr. MOLLOY (King's County, Birr): I think the First Commissioner is entitled to some sympathy and commiseration at the hands of the House, because he has succeeded to a system over which he has no initial control. This system of contracts existed long before the right hon. Gentleman entered into office, and I presume that he has felt himself bound to continue matters as he found them. Therefore there is no blame to be attached to the right hon. Gentleman himself for the state of affairs which now exists, but on the other hand we have to look at the matter as a question of principle. By appointing a Royal Commission, Parliament has set its face against the putting of an unjust tax on the earnings of the working classes; and, therefore, the First Commissioner may fairly be asked to look into the matter and see what can be done in the future. The deductions made in this case amount to 20 per cent of the earnings, and that is nearly the maximum of the cases that have been brought before the Committee on Sweating. It is surely work in which the intervention of a contractor is quite unnecessary. We have our own Clerk of the Works, who is quite capable of seeing that the cleaning is done without the intervention of a contractor. Therefore, by employing a contractor, we are guilty of robbery of the earnings of the workmen to the extent of 20 per cent. Surely the right hon. Gentleman will tell us that the question is worth looking into, and will provide, when the present contracts are terminated, that these intermediaries shall be got rid of.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I think that we ought to have a more definite assurance from the right hon. Gentleman than that which has been suggested, and unless we receive it we ought to go to a Division. The system ought to be definitely put a stop to as soon as the existing contracts come to an end. That is what we should press for, and unless a distinct understanding is come to I hope my hon. Friend will press the Motion to a Division.

*Mr. PLUNKET: This question was raised in Committee on a former occasion, and also by a Memorial which has been sent to me. I have considered it as carefully as I could, and I should be glad if I were able to remove the inequality complained of. The general system of getting our work done through contractors has always been regarded as successful hitherto; and the only exception to that system are the gasmen and furniture men employed in this House. These particular *employés* are not employed in any other public building. Then, of course, we had to consider the most economical way of doing the work, but I am perfectly willing on the termination of the contract to give the subject further consideration, and no doubt by that time we shall have the result of investigations which are being made into the whole question of the employment of middlemen in such cases. I believe it would be impossible to give the distinct pledge I am asked for.

*Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): There is no doubt a difficulty about giving the specific pledge asked for by the Mover of the Amendment. But I should have liked to have heard, besides a promise to consider this subject, some condemnation of what does seem to me a system which requires an explicit condemnation in this House. The wage of these poor men is very low, and you can easily get enough of starving men to compete for employment. But that is not a reason, it seems to me, from what has been alleged by the right hon. Gentleman, for continuing this system of contracts. I could understand if there was a difficulty in these men receiving their wages direct from the Office of Works, but it seems possible that they could do so. Although it is perfectly true that while the existing contract, including this House and other public buildings, continues, it may be impossible for the Commissioner of Works to deal with these men. I do think that the Chief Commissioner would be well advised if he would allow the good nature of his own character to influence him, and say that he would rather look at it from the point of view of these poor men than from the point of view of middlemen, who in this case are unnecessary. I would suggest to my hon. Friend not to press the Amendment to a Division, and would urge the Chief Commissioner to put more of the good nature personal to himself and less of his office into the investigation of this matter.

Mr. MOLLOY: I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman merely to look into this matter and do nothing; I ask him to investigate it with the view to making an alteration. The reason given by him for maintaining this system of intermediaries or contractors is that the work is done cheaply. I go to this extent, and say that even though the work cost more than it does now, we, who are condemning sweating in every other department of life, are bound to put an end to it in our own case. There is a margin of £825 under maintenance and repairs. Now, 20 per cent is deducted from the earnings of these men, amounting to about £1,700. Well, you have this £1,700, and you have £800 to employ a superior Clerk of the Works to carry out repairs and maintenance, without going into a system of sweating as you are now. I would point out that in voting for the Government in this matter you are voting for the system of sweating. ["No!"] It is of no use saying "No." The right hon. Gentleman has admitted that it is the sweating system. [Mr. Plunket: No!] Will the right hon. Gentleman say that deducting 20 per cent out of a man's wages is not sweating? Twenty per cent is the maximum in a number of accusations of sweating brought before the Royal Commissioners, and I am entitled to say that in voting for the Government you are voting for the system of sweating. I think the statement of the Chief Commissioner unsatisfactory, though I quite admit the difficulty of his position. Those who refuse to vote for the Motion of my hon. Friend will have to answer for doing so in another place.

*MR. PLUNKET: All I have undertaken to do is simply this, that when the contract concludes I will look carefully into the matter. If the House of Commons is of opinion that these men should no longer be employed under the present system of contract, I shall gladly endeavour to give the decision effect, but it must be done distinctly as the act of the House of Commons. In my position as a custodian of the public purse, so far as my office is concerned, it is my duty to endeavour to get the work done as cheaply as possible consistently with efficiency. I have given an undertaking to go carefully into the matter, and I cannot go further.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): Mr. Courtney, the explanations of the right hon. Gentleman are unsatisfactory. This is not the first time this question has been ventilated in the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman himself has been considering it for months, and what we want from him is a distinct statement of what is his own judgment of the grievances of these men. We do not ask him to point out the remedy now, but we ask him whether he thinks a wage of 5½d. and 4½d. per hour, subject to 25 per cent and 20 per cent reduction is satisfactory? If it is unhandsome and unfair payment, then this House, and not the contractors, ought to do its own dirty work by paying these men the low wages instead of paying the contractor the full wage. We should like to know the right hon. Gentleman's own judgment in this matter, and whether he thinks the grievance established.

MR. ISAACS: I can amplify the remarks of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken by stating that the reduction of the wages of these men is just double what is ordinarily allowed. The ordinary profit of a private builder or contractor is 10 per cent, and I fail to see, when we come to these poor men, that they should be subjected to just double the reduction. I venture to make this observation to the right hon. Gentleman, because I am sure he will give the whole matter his earnest consideration. If the contract system is continued there ought to be a stipulation that the reduction of the men's wages should not be greater than 10 per cent. But the right hon. Gentleman would do well to notice the feeling of the House that the whole system should be changed, and that these men should come under the actual control of the Office of Works.

*MR. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, East): Hon. Gentlemen opposite appear to contend that all work done by contract or by sub-contract must inevitably be done under what is known as the sweating system. Such a contention is, to my mind, ridiculous. A great deal of work in this country is done in all industries by contract, and, in nearly every instance, the workmen receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, not invariably, however, and that is what we want to remedy as a consequence of this inquiry into the sweating system. But does the workman always give a fair day's work for a fair day's wage? Not always, I think. To give an instance, Westminster Hall is included in this Vote. A few months ago I passed by Westminster Hall with a friend, and we noticed the proverbial man and a boy on the roof, nominally at work slating the roof, but practically idling their time away; we passed again in four hours, and they were still engaged in laboriously doing nothing. I very much doubt if one slate had been affixed during the time. Now, if we do away with the contracting system, and the work is done under the control of a Clerk of the Works appointed by the First Commissioner of Works, it will be needful to see that the country gets its fair day's work for a fair day's wage. For the interest of the taxpayer that ought to be seen to. If that is satisfactorily seen to, I do not see that it makes much difference whether the work is done by contract or not.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: The right hon. Gentleman opposite has been talking of the outside of the building, when he might have said something more appropriate with regard to the interior. I do not see that the right hon. Gentleman has improved the case which has been put from this side of the House. He has not denied the fact that 20 per cent. is deducted from the men's wages, which is what I call sweating pure and simple. Let us have no mincing of terms with regard to this question; it is one on which we ought to express a clear and definite opinion. We have to thank the hon. Member for Walworth (Mr. Isaacs) for what he has said with regard to the contract as it exists, but we ought to ask for a distinct expression of opinion on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works that the principle on which that contract is being carried out should cease to be observed when the contract is at an end. What is asked is that those who are employed in the work you are contracting for should be put in the position of getting for themselves the 5½d. per hour you are paying.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I think the time has come when a decision may fairly be arrived at. I have already stated that at the termination of the present contract I will undertake that this whole matter shall be most carefully considered. It is for the House of Commons to say how its work should be done, and whatever decision the House of Commons arrives at, I will, of course, endeavour to carry out. Beyond this it is impossible for me to offer any pledge.

*Mr. CREMER: The right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Plunket) twelve months ago made a promise that was quite as clear and definite as that which he has made to-day; therefore, we know what is meant by the consideration he proposes to give to the matter. The fact is, that we are left in the same state of indefiniteness as that in which we were placed a year since, and unless the right hon. Gentleman will give us a distinct promise not only that he will seriously consider the matter, but that, as far as he is concerned—for he cannot bind his successors—he will pledge himself not to renew any contracts such as that which is now objected to, I shall insist on going to a Division, so that it may be clearly understood that our action on this Vote is an earnest protest against the sweating system.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I should like to avoid a Division if it be possible to do so. The right hon. Gentleman has said that of his own motion he cannot alter the present system, but that it is necessary, if any alteration is to be made, that it should be by a Resolution of this House. He is merely an executive officer, and has to carry out the contract system which he finds laid down for him. It seems to me, however, that the matter we are now discussing is one in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman might well make the alteration we ask for. If he does not want to compromise the position of the men by what might be an unfortunate Division, he might offer some sort of assurance setting forth not only that he has the right to make an alteration at the end of the contract, but that he will do so if he finds that the general feeling of the House is in favour of that course.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I have already said that if it be the wish of a majority of the House that an alteration should be made in the system under which the work is now carried on, I will, at the termination of the contract, give effect to that view.

Mr. STUART: This is a good opportunity for enforcing the view of the House in regard to the sweating system, and I trust that that view will be clearly and unmistakably expressed.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 149; Noes 226.—(Div. List, No. 60.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I rise to a question of order, Mr. Courtney. Before the hon. Member for Queen's County proceeds with his Amendment, I wish to ask a question upon item C. Shall I be precluded from doing so if the hon. Member now proceeds to move to reduce Item D?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Northampton must raise his point now.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I have already spoken to the right hon. Gentleman on the subject, but I wish to point out that a very fine picture in this House is being gradually destroyed, owing to the state of ventilation, and I wish to ask if the right hon. Gentleman will consider the best means of preserving it from absolute destruction? I do not want to move any reduction of the Vote; all I want is an assurance that the matter shall have attention.

*MR. PLUNKET: I am considering the best steps to be taken to gain the end desired by not only the hon. Member, but by all of us.

DR. FARQUHARSON: I think some of the frescoes upstairs are in a very bad and deplorable state. Those in the House of Lords are gradually becoming obscured, but I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider the best means of utilizing decorative art to fill up these panels.

*MR. PLUNKET: I have looked into the matter, and have caused the pictures and frescoes in the House to be carefully examined. I am afraid that some of the frescoes upstairs are past praying for; I will, however, again consider the matter. Now, Mr. Courtney, I must make an appeal to the Committee to come to a decision on this Vote. We have been discussing it nearly four hours, and I would point out that if all the Votes are to be discussed at this length, we shall take not weeks but years to get through these Estimates. I hope the Committee will now agree to this Vote.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I am very sorry to intervene in this debate. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that many of the frescoes are past praying for, but in the particular frescoe of Herbert's——

MR. CAVENDISH BENTINCK: It is not a fresco.

MR. MUNDELLA: I wish to point out that it is not in such a bad condition as is generally supposed, and it is really worth while spending a minute or two of the House in discussing it. I think it is one of the best frescoes we have in England. If the right hon. Gentleman opposite wishes it, I will, to satisfy him, call it a picture. I do trust the First Commissioner of Works will think it worth his while to do what he can while the artist yet lives, to save this valuable picture.

*MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory): In moving to reduce Item E by £500, Sir, I feel that I am about to discuss a question which involves not only the convenience but the health and even the lives of Members of this House, and not of the Members only, but of the officials, from the Clerk at the Table down to the humblest policeman. I consider that the ventilation of this House is simply shocking, and that our healths must suffer if some improvement be not effected in this matter. I know that a great deal of money and thought has been expended on the ventilation of the chamber in which we are seated, and I am aware that the great difficulty which besets any one who has to deal with this subject arises from the fact that the House is too small to accommodate all its Members. I have not sufficient special scientific knowledge to say whether the ventilation of this House is as good as human science can make it; but of one thing I am quite convinced, and that is, that the ventilation of the other portions of this building—of the Members' lobby, of the passages and corridors, and of the rooms allotted to the Press—is simply disgraceful. Now the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works is always courteous, and he will, I am sure, tell me what is the exact duty of the officer who has charge of the ventilation of this House, and whether it is simply his duty to take care of this Chamber, or does he have to look after other portions of the building? If he looks after the whole of the building, he has surely something more to do through himself and his agents than to see that the thermometers always register an equable temperature. Why, Sir, should not some attempt be made to introduce pure air into the entire building? I remember the state of things during the Autumn Session, when the atmosphere here was most unhealthy. Why are not the windows opened at times when it would not inconvenience Members? Then, again, I consider the state of things upstairs most objectionable. The air which has to be breathed by reporters and others concerned in writing for the Press is dreadful, and if hon. Members do not believe it, I wish they would go upstairs and see for themselves. Something has been done, I am aware, in the shape of substituting the electric light for gas, but I want to know why electricity is not to be carried through all parts of the building? I understand you intend to put it in the Members' Lobby. Why should it not go into other rooms, where we now burn gas? There seems to be a fallacy with regard to this matter of thermometers.

It being ten minutes to Seven of the clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

JUDICIAL FACTORS (SCOTLAND) [SALARY, &c.].

Resolution reported: "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Salary to the Accountant of Court, who may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to amend and extend the law relating to Judicial Factors and others in Scotland, and to unite the office of the Accountant of the Court of Session and the Accountant in Bankruptcy in Scotland, and of Salaries to the clerks who may be appointed by him, also the payment of compensation to the holder of the office of Accountant of the Court of Session for abolition of his office, and of remuneration to such persons as may be employed to audit accounts under the provisions of the said Act."

Resolution agreed to.

The House resumed.

Attention was drawn to the fact that forty Members were not present.

The House was counted, and forty Members were found to be present.

MOTION.

POOR IN LARGE TOWNS.

*Mr. **BROADHURST** (Nottingham, W.): Mr. Speaker, in moving the Resolution which stands in my name, I confess I have an exceedingly difficult task before me. I claim no more power of solving this problem than others possess, and my desire is to submit this Resolution to the House rather in the hope of eliciting from all parts of the House contributions to the discussion of the subject than with the intention of making a speech which shall contain antidotes for the evils to which I shall allude. Now, as to the number of poor in the country at the present time in proportion to the number in the past, it is difficult for anyone to make anything like an approximate estimate that will be of material importance or very reliable, simply from the fact that there are no means of obtaining the information. The Poor Law Returns, to which one would naturally turn for information of this kind, seem to prove, if they prove anything, a diminution in the number of persons falling upon the rates for assistance. I find that in 1873 the number of persons receiving Poor Law relief was 1,083,101, or about 3¼ per cent of the population; and the latest Return gives the number at 1,035,997, or about 2½ per cent of the population. I do not think, however, that the Poor Law Returns are to be relied upon absolutely as giving a true indication of the amount of poverty which exists in the country, or as indicating an increase or decrease in the number of poor. There is a growing dislike to the stigma of Poor Law relief, and many of the poorest people would rather suffer the greatest privation than allow themselves to be brought under this stigma. Then there is now a tendency to make the existence of poverty more widely known; and a determination on the part of those who suffer not to suffer in silence in the future as they have done in the past. This may induce a belief that the number of the very poor is on the increase. Another fact which may make it appear that poverty is on the increase, is that the poor are now more concentrated than they used to be. People scattered in a thousand different parishes in various parts of the United Kingdom cannot possibly give such effect to their complaints as people gathered together in large centres such as London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. This may account, to a great extent, for the persistency with which the existence of poverty is brought under our notice. Certainly it proves that, whether the proportion of the very poor be larger or smaller, it is not as safe in these days as in the past, to say nothing of the right and wrong of the matter, to ignore the existence of the suffering of the people. If there is a great wrong which requires redress, if there is great and widespread poverty which requires relief, it is right and proper, and better for the country, that we should know of it, and, if possible, attempt some relief of it, rather than it should go on indefinitely accumulating till it becomes a great national danger. I shall mainly refer to the class that suffers probably more than any other—namely, the unskilled labour part of the community. Mechanics and artizans possess the means, if they choose to avail themselves of them, of assisting themselves in times of trouble and in times of scarcity of employment. There are few skilled industries but what has a trades' union, and a trades' union provides for its members in case of want of employment. Taking 26 trades' unions, I find that, in periods varying from 10 to 50 years, they have distributed relief in various forms to the extent of more than eight millions sterling. No one can tell the amount of poverty that this expenditure has prevented, and no one can tell the calamity to the country it has warded off. But the unskilled labourers are the greatest sufferers. They suffer more because of the uncertainty of employment and the difficulty of combining in order to provide against want of occupation. It is to the unskilled class that we ought to have special regard when we deal with such a question as this. It would be quite safe to say there is scarcely a branch of employment of unskilled labour that is not terribly overcrowded. I refer particularly to the warehouse labourers, the general labourers, the men who assist mechanics in the unskilled portion of their work, and the seamstresses among the female portion of the community, who are all engaged in branches of industry so overcrowded as to make it almost impossible to gain anything like a living. Then there is the chain and nail industry. The condition of the people engaged in this industry is deplorable beyond description. The hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) and the hon. Member for Lanarkshire (Mr. Cuninghame Graham) discussed the condition of these people the other day as though it had never previously been before the House. I remember bringing the question under the notice of the House four or five years ago.

*Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I specially referred to the fact that the condition of the nail and chain makers had been repeatedly under the attention of Parliament in past years.

*Mr. BROADHURST: I accept the hon. Gentleman's correction with much pleasure. What I wanted to point out was that I had brought the question before the House, although I am bound to say the miserable support I obtained on the occasion was not very encouraging to me to pursue other efforts in the same direction. Then some fearful revelations were made in the Report of Mr. Burnett, of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade; and it was that Report, I have no doubt, which mainly led to the appointment of what is called the Sweating Committee. The House will remember the description of the condition of the workers in the tailoring trades of the East End—they will remember that it was shown that men, women, and young persons were employed in the most unhealthy rooms for wages not sufficient to keep body and soul together. We hope that the inquiry now proceeding will have some effect in bringing redress to these wretched people. Now, Sir, I have no doubt the introduction of machinery accounts, to a great extent, for the existence of a vast amount of suffering among the unskilled labourers. As an illustration of this, let me say that I witnessed at Sheffield a few weeks ago the forging of a piece of steel weighing about 35 tons. The metal was being forged with the aid of eight or ten men, who were simply employed in certain subordinate duties connected with the movement of the forging; and it struck me at the time that this enormous mass of steel, which was to form the driving shaft of a ship, was being treated by the almost human machinery as if it were a penholder in the hand of a strong man. My right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds (Sir L. Playfair), in an article in the March number of the "Contemporary Review," stated that he had witnessed a machine which displaced the labour of 999 workers by hand. In the cotton and wool trades, also, machines have been invented which will accomplish more in a given time than 500 pairs of human hands did previously. Inventions are improving upon inventions every day we live, motive power is increasing in force and in efficiency, and unless the labourers can secure a share of the increased productive power by a decrease in the hours of labour, I do not see what is to be the end, so far as the labourers are concerned, in this enormous ever daily and hourly increase of machinery. The prospect is one which we must look upon with some anxiety, if not alarm. I do not think it is possible to ask the House to give the displaced hands compensation from the State by way of finding them employment at the cost of the State, though I am not sure that some of my hon. Friends are not prepared to ask the House to do so. But what I think we may reasonably do is, to ask the House to see that the children of the victims to the increase of machinery, to the inventive genius of the nation, shall not, at any rate, suffer either in food requirements or educational necessities. The children are our future men and women, and much of our prosperity or otherwise will depend upon the amount of succour we give them in their childhood; and I ask the House to declare, in the first place, that so grave is the condition of large numbers of the poor of our great centres of population, that we should, without undue delay, press such measures as shall secure to their children a national education free from direct contribution by the parents. This is a definite proposal; it is germane to the Motion, and I believe its adoption would be fraught with the happiest and best results to the children themselves, and certainly to the country of which they are to be citizens. Then, I ask that it should be the duty of the country to see that such children as are of school age should not be required to receive their elementary education on empty stomachs. A more hopeless, heartless, cruel task than to endeavour to drive grammar and arithmetic into the brains of a child that is almost starving for the necessaries of life it is impossible to imagine. This may appear an extreme proposal. I make it entirely on my own responsibility, and it pledges the adherence of no other Member. It was once my sad lot to visit a Board School in the poorest part of Southwark, and I think I shall be within the truth when I say that of the 200 or 300 scholars in the school scarcely a dozen had sufficient garments on them to cover their nakedness, scarcely any of them had shoes, and each had want stamped upon his features. No more pitiful, heartbreaking sight could be contemplated by human being than to see the teachers doing their best to prepare these poor young brains for their future contest in life, knowing at the same time that they had not sufficient food for the physical and mental effort necessary to receive the instruction. This may be called Socialism or any other ism. I am not prepared to contest the point, but I do contend that it is unwise, that it is neglectful, that it is cruel for the nation to allow thousands of its children to grow up under such conditions, their mental and physical growth dwarfed, and their capacity for being of service to their country in after-life lessened by such a commencement in their career. I have no hesitation in saying that we should provide free education for the poor children of the community; and that it should be so free, that there should be no pauper taint attaching to it as there is to those educated free under the present conditions, and it should be the duty of the country to see that these children have one solid, wholesome, healthy hot meal on each of their school days. This is not an extreme proposal, and I think many hon. Members will be inclined to support it. I believe that the supply of food could be so arranged that a vast number of the children whose parents are not of the very poor, yet who have a keen struggle for existence with the difficulty of finding employment—could have meals composed of good wholesome food supplied to them at the lowest possible price; and I feel sure vast numbers would appreciate the blessing of such an arrangement. There would be an addition to the present school work. You could not provide 300 or 400 children with a daily meal without arrangements for buying and cooking, but that could be easily done. Many works in this country at the present time do, on co-operative principles, provide meals for the workpeople engaged on the premises. I know one instance where any adult employed can have a good hot meal for fivepence, and any young person can have a dinner in the middle of the day for twopence halfpenny. And this plan pays its way—there is no charity about it, not the least in the world. Now, if this can be done on a liberal scale of diet, as it is in a comparatively small way, there can be little doubt that, if adopted on a large scale, the cost might be reduced one-half. In cases where it is necessary these meals should be absolutely free I do not think there is anything unreasonable in the proposition, and I feel convinced that the work of education would be easier if the children were not in a half-starved condition. Make these arrangements for the supply of food in districts where the necessity may reasonably be expected to exist, and you may utilize them further by the supply of cheap food to adults in the evening. Such establishments would, no doubt, attract a great amount of charitable assistance and voluntary labour. Such a plan would, in my opinion, bring untold blessings upon those we all desire to assist, and render a great service to the nation. There are many features of the suggestion I am compelled to pass over for time presses, and I now come to the question of the housing of the poor, a still more difficult question. Those who have paid any attention to the Report of the Committee on the subject will know the difficulties. I will not detain the House by going over all the references I had intended to make. The Report will show the desperate condition existing in the Metropolis and throughout the country among our fellow-countrymen in regard to this question. In some districts there is scarcely a house but what has each room occupied by a separate family, and in many cases there are two families in one room, persons of all ages and both sexes, and in rooms, too, not affording sufficient space for healthy occupation by two persons. The death-rate in these districts is 60 or 70 per thousand. A back cellar, in some instances, as you will see by reference to the evidence on page 8, fetches from 3s. to 4s. 6d. a week. We have a long account from Mr. Marchant Williams, an Officer of the London School Board, and it will be seen he shows that from a fifth to a fourth of the weekly earnings of the poor is consumed in their rent-charge. It is certain that people so crowded and huddled together cannot grow up into healthy, desirable citizens. But my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dumfries will deal at greater length with these evils and the proposed remedy. In regard to the lodgings of the very poor, there are no places in England provided but the common lodging-houses and the casual ward, neither of them very desirable places. The common lodging-house is, of course, better than the street, but it is under no effective supervision. There are provisions in an Act of Parliament about area and cubic spaces, and so on; but there is no visiting authority to see that the entire space is not occupied by twice the number of persons that should occupy it. They are under police supervision, which is periodical and effective so far as white-washing is concerned, but for no other practical purposes. They are not the places to tend to the improvement of the health or nature of those who are forced to avail themselves of this shelter. The casual ward is an addition to the work-house even more repulsive than the workhouse itself; it is often difficult to find; there is much uncertainty as to admission; and the most degrading conditions are imposed on those who are compelled to take refuge in the ward. With regard to shelter for the very poor, let me mention what has been done in Glasgow. The municipal authorities have provided six large lodging houses, five for males and one for females. These houses are under municipal control, and the person seeking shelter there does so under the best condition possible at the price paid. He has a bunk to himself, privacy, and more comfort than at first sight would seem possible. There are arrangements by which he may cook his own food, or he may buy it on the premises. Strict discipline and a good moral tone is maintained throughout, and habits of cleanliness are insisted upon, unaccompanied, however, with any of the degrading conditions of the casual ward. The average number of persons housed is 2,000 each night; and what is surprising and satisfactory to the ratepayers of Glasgow, 4½ per cent is paid on the capital invested. This is, perhaps, the most pleasing feature of the whole proceeding, and I do not see why the example of Glasgow should not be followed by every municipal or county authority in the United Kingdom. I would certainly suggest to the Local Government Board that they should encourage the County Councils to follow this example.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Can the hon. Member say what rent is paid?

*MR. BROADHURST: Unfortunately, I did not provide myself with the figures. I went over one of these houses from top to bottom, and I can speak of the wonderful efficiency and cleanliness of everything. If I remember rightly, threepence per night was the charge for lodging. I cannot go into the whole question of housing the very poor—it involves heavy questions of the first importance; the leaseholders' question, the question of ground rents, and the whole question of Land Law Reform is connected with it. [*A laugh.*] The question does affect the housing of the poor, and cannot be laughed away. You have a great and distinguished man in England at the present moment who takes an extreme view of the Land Question as it affects towns and rural districts, and whose doctrines are making enormous progress. [Several hon. MEMBERS: Who?] Mr. Henry George. [*Laughter.*] Yes; you laugh, and that is the fallacy that afflicted people in times gone by; but, depend upon it, this matter will not be laughed out of existence—it is too serious, too great, it has taken too deep root in the country to be lightly disposed of. Whether you consent to consider it or not, the question remains that your population is growing in extent most alarming, and politically dangerous. If you do not take this question in hand, and consider how you should limit the monopoly of land in our great centres, then the question will force itself to the front, and solve itself in a manner none of us now desire and some of us cannot imagine. The increase of population in London since 1831 has been 2,500,000, and in the same period Glasgow has increased by 500,000 souls. You cannot ignore these facts and the growing danger with them. I am not proposing the removal of people from the congested populations of towns and agricultural districts. I do not see much value in that. The habits of the people in the towns and their enfeebled constitutions unfit them for agricultural pursuits. But something should be done to lessen the tendency of population to draw towards the great towns. It is difficult to speak exactly about the increase or decrease of population in our rural districts. Some people say there is no decrease, whilst others say that a large decrease is constantly going on. A paper read at the Statistical Society a year or two ago showed that from 1851 to 1881 the population living by agricultural pursuits had decreased by 418,000, and that from 1871 to 1881 it had decreased by 162,000. I believe these figures rather under-estimate than over-estimate the decrease. Our Census Returns are not made up in the manner best calculated to afford information on these points. I understand the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) to assent to that proposition, and I hope he will do something to rectify it in the next Census Return. I say that the facts are very alarming. While the rural population is decreasing our imports of food are increasing very rapidly.

An hon. MEMBER: Free Trade.

*MR. BROADHURST: I do not think we should argue the question of Free Trade now, and the temptation to take a line of that sort is so great that I hope I shall not be further invited to it. We are importing food to the value of £100,000,000 a year which we could equally well produce in this country if the land were free for the people to cultivate. Nearly the whole of these imports might be produced in our own country if the land were free to cultivate. It is perfectly well known that your large holding system has nearly ruined many people. I have some figures here which I will read to the House. They have been supplied by a former Member of this House. In the parish of Lavington, which is situate in a county with which the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Long) is associated, there is a farm of 2,344 acres rented at under 10s. 3d. per acre, whose occupier failed in 1887 with liabilities amounting to £36,000, including £14,000 for rent. There are 500 acres in the same parish rented at from 15s. to 16s. per acre in the hands of 64 small occupiers who punctually pay their rent. These figures speak volumes in favour of a direct reform in our system of land owning and land hiring. A holding of 250 acres would probably employ only two men and a couple of boys, except at harvest time, but if the 250 acres were divided into 50 portions they would employ 60 men. It is perfectly well known that the smaller a holding the larger amount of labour employed per acre. If these are facts, and no one can deny their substantial truthfulness, how necessary is it that the House should bring its mind to the solution of the Land Question, and see whether it cannot prevent the continual increase of population in big centres by encouraging our rural population to stay at home by offering them opportunities of bettering themselves? Had it not been for the cheap food which we have imported from abroad, we should have had a revolution in this country before to-day. Nothing has saved this country from disaster during the last ten years so much as the cheap and plentiful supply of food which we have been compelled to obtain from foreign countries instead of growing it at our own doors. It is a scandal, a disgrace, and a danger to this or any other country to have such a large accumulation of wealth on the one hand, and such widespread and deep-seated poverty on the other, without some efforts being made to equalize the two conditions of life thus set forth. The House of Commons is overburdened and overworked, and we hope to relieve it before long of some of its functions. After the House has been relieved of those functions which my hon. Friends have specially in their minds, there are other directions in which it may be relieved of some of its labours in order that it may devote part of its time to the improvement of the condition of the people whom it is supposed to represent. Civilized government fails unless it attends to the wants of the least influential of our fellow-creatures. I hope there will be some practical outcome from the proceedings of to-night. If nothing is done to remedy the evils which I have described, the fault will lie at the door of those who, having been warned, have refused to listen to the warning. It is nine years to-day since I was first elected a Member of this honourable House, and I can truly say that I have never occupied the attention of the House on a subject in which I take so deep an interest, and the solution of which I so heartily desire. I apologize to the House for having taken up so much of its time, and I thank hon. Members for the patience with which they have listened to me. I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, in the opinion of this House, the chronic poverty of great numbers of the people living in the large cities and towns of Great Britain is a danger to the well-being of the State, and calls for the instant attention of the Government to remedial measures by which the depopulation of the agricultural districts may be checked, and the congestion of the great centres of population relieved."—(*Mr. Broadhurst.*)

MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.): I rise, Sir, to second the Motion. My hon. Friend has, in opening the discussion, traversed a very large area, and it is impossible for me to cover all the ground which he has travelled over. I will endeavour to condense my remarks as much as possible. The Motion is one of supreme importance; it deals with the condition of the poor in town and country, not with that poverty which is the result of misconduct—the retribution which follows upon imtemperance or indolence—but with that preventible poverty which I and those who agree with me say bad laws have made and good laws can repair. The position, as I understand it, is this—there is a constant flow from the country districts into the towns of persons unable to find occupation in the country. The agricultural labourer works for scanty wages, and when he can work no longer, unless his children support him, he must go into the workhouse. He cannot get a cottage or a piece of land, and there is no career open to him unless he moves into a town or emigrates. Accordingly he comes into a town, where he finds himself at the tender mercies of the employer of labour, and falls under the sweating system. Hon. Gentlemen know that the evidence before the Royal Commission revealed as horrible a state of things as could be conceived. You have these described to you—the one-room system, the one-bed system, the extreme infantile mortality, the exhaustion of men in full maturity. All I can say is that, if that Report does not convince hon. Gentlemen of the horrors of the system, nothing I can say has any chance of convincing them. I do not, however, desire to describe the situation, but to suggest remedies. In the first place, however, I will say a word or two in regard to remedies I do not recommend. I think I never saw so many Fair Traders together as I see sitting opposite to me now. It is gratifying; but I am not going to treat Fair Trade as a serious question, because hon. Gentlemen opposite do not treat it as a serious question. If they were in earnest, they could put pressure on the Treasury Bench, and raise the question by discussions and divisions in the

House. When I see a body of Gentlemen using a question as an election cry, but not prepared to press it in the House, or to submit to the test of a General Election, I say to myself, "Those Gentlemen are not in earnest." I will pass to what has been said by my hon. Friend about restricting the hours of labour. I know that is a very difficult question. I am somewhat sympathetic with the argument, because I think that women especially are exceedingly overworked and unable to protect themselves; and I would rather err on the side of over-protection than on the other side with regard to them. With regard to men, the case is different, though there may be some employments in which it may be necessary to interfere. To interfere by restricting the hours of labour, however, would not work a solution of the difficulty. One word as to emigration. If there is no better method of dealing with the very poor than to send them out of their own country—the richest in the world—at a time when there are millions of acres uncultivated, we had better renounce the attempt of improving the condition of the population. My hon. Friend did not refer to the question of co-operation, and I must say a word on the subject. Co-operation may hereafter play a very great part in benefiting the poor, but it cannot possibly have any practical success until we deal with the one thing which is at the root of the mischief, and which goes down to the very bottom of our social evils—namely, the land system. What is the land system? What do the Land Laws allow the landlord to do? They allow him to use or to abuse the land at his caprice, to let it lie waste and uncultivated, and to convert it into deer forests. In my own country out of 19,000,000 acres there are 2,000,000 acres of deer forests, a great part of which might be available for maintaining the people. Landlords can prevent the growth and expansion of villages and small towns, they can prevent cottages from being built, and thereby cause poor people to leave the country. They can prevent any factory from being erected in the country. [*A laugh.*] The hon. Gentleman opposite need not smile. My hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester (Mr. Winterbotham) has decided the question satisfactorily, for he has a large factory in a purely rural district. In my own constituency quite recently a great attempt was made to have a factory erected, the capital was forthcoming, and it would have been a great boon, but the landlord refused the land on any possible terms. Landlords cannot be compelled to sell except by Act of Parliament, or to allow any other person to use the land. Acts of Parliament are passed only for public undertakings, and private enterprizes are absolutely at the mercy of the landlords. Will hon. Gentlemen realize what it is to leave the prosperity of rural England to the caprices of a comparatively small and rather short-sighted body of men? Who can doubt that small shopkeepers and labourers would, by the practice of self-denial and thrift, obtain some small portion of the land if it were possible to do so on fair terms? There is no one who loves a piece of land on which to found a home more than an Englishman. If what I suggest were possible, villages would expand, agricultural labourers would gain their independence, and would gradually rise in the social scale, from cottage to allotment, from allotment to small holding, and, perhaps, from small holding to small farm. I do not say they would all rise, but there would be a career open to all of them. That is all perfectly impossible now. I would ask those landlords who are present how many agricultural labourers they know who have raised themselves to the position of small farmers? If any hon. Member can quote many, his experience is very exceptional. I am perfectly satisfied that if it happens in even a small degree it must be through the kindness and wisdom of landlords in different parts of the country; but it is common knowledge that landlords who encourage that kind of thing are comparatively few. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen deny that proposition, but they had better do so in debate. I speak from experience when I say that only in a very few instances does it happen. I know of 80 holdings of three acres and upwards which were started in 1848 by that most admirable landlord in Dumfriesshire, Mr. Hope Johnstone. The holdings were taken by hedgemen, ploughmen, small shopkeepers, foresters, and men of that stamp. They were only granted on leases of 21 years; but the leases have been renewed by the landlord. What has been the result? Anyone who was able to get one of these pendicles—as the holdings are called—was only too glad to get it; and now the pendicles stand as monuments of the success which attends such efforts. But, in the whole county of Dumfries, that is a unique instance. I will now ask the House to allow me to suggest what I think the remedies must be. If this state is to be changed, it is of no use dealing with the old Whig reforms of primogeniture, the simplification of title and registration things which any competent lawyer, if he had his heart in his work, could put into an Act of Parliament to-morrow and pass with the greatest ease. It is necessary to do more; and I maintain that, in order to prevent the involuntary depopulation of the rural districts, it is necessary to give public bodies in the country full powers not merely to take land for public purposes strictly so-called, but on honest terms—that is, a fair price—to take land, subject, if you will, to the supervision of the Local Government Board, for the legitimate use of all persons who toil in the particular district in order to establish allotments or small holdings. If such a form were adopted for the rural parts, in my opinion the towns would cease to be so congested; but that is not at all sufficient. We have to deal with the condition of things in London and other large towns which is a disgrace to the country itself. The London landlords have neglected every duty of their position. They have let their land to middlemen, who sub-let it at enormous rent. The London landlords do not even take the trouble to enforce the covenants of their leases. They omit every sanitary precaution, and they rack-rent the poor people of London to a degree that is even unknown to the peasantry of some of the worst rack-rented parts of Ireland. The Report of the Royal Commission, which, by the way, I regard as a rather halting document, states, in referring to the generally lamentable condition of the homes of the labouring classes, that the first thing which demands attention is the poverty of the inhabitants of the poorest quarters of the towns, or, in other words, the relation borne by the wages the people receive to the rents they have to pay. To such an extent has the evil of excessive rents gone that even in the parishes which have large charities in London the charities are appropriated for the purpose of raising rent. It was proved before the Royal Commission that in the rich London parishes the very fact that there are large charities for distribution raised the rents of the wretched people who live there. I remember a clergyman of the Church of England, who worked hard in one of the parishes of London, at one time telling me that, after all the labour and money which he and his charitable friends expended, the result was enough to break his heart, because their poor were so looked after that even the charity bestowed upon them was the means of raising their rents. I maintain that the London landlords have neglected every duty, and that they stand condemned on the face of the Report of the Royal Commission. If that is so, a public effort ought to be made to remedy the state of things. Private efforts will be of no use, and I am well aware that the public efforts of the Metropolitan Board of Works have been very costly. If there were a better system of legal expenditure in regard to ascertaining the cost of property, and if the American system were, under equitable conditions, introduced, it would be easy to make it cheaper than it is. But, whatever the cost, we cannot allow the work to remain undone. The present state of things is a source of danger to us; it is a source of disgrace to us, and I should be very sorry to believe there was anyone who did not desire to see this hideous evil removed. Now we have the County Council, we ought to give the County Council power to buy and to let buildings, and deal with the question subject to two principles—first, that every honest and industrious man is entitled, as an inhabitant of London, to have a decent dwelling at a fair rent; and, secondly, that the expense of making towns habitable for the toilers must be thrown on the land which their toil makes valuable, and that without any effort on the part of the owner. If the House will deal thoroughly with this question, I am persuaded we shall hear less of the unemployed and of agricultural depression; and, above all, we shall not have those miserable dens which are responsible for half the crime of the country. Hon. Members live in the midst of a city of immeasurable wealth, filled with splendid houses and overflowing with luxury, and yet within a few hundred yards of this House there is a degree of misery which is hardly to be paralleled in the Queen's Dominions. I wonder at the patience with which men endure this misery. It cannot be supposed they will continue indefinitely to submit to a system which condemns them, their wives, and families, to a precarious existence in a wretched lodging, without much of decency or hope of improvement. I appeal to the sense of justice and generosity of the House. It may be that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen now in power may not be prepared to deal with this matter in the spirit which I think necessary—I am afraid the drift of their policy lies in a different direction; but I trust the Liberal Leaders, at all events, will recognize that attention to these social questions in the most important and pressing of their duties, for, if they decline so to deal with them, they will not retain, and in my opinion will not deserve to retain, the confidence of the country.

*MR. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's): Mr. Speaker, I think we, on this side of the House, may fairly congratulate the Mover and Seconder of the Motion on the moderate tone they have displayed in their speeches so far as Party feeling is concerned. But I am not so sure we can go as far as to do that in regard to the remedies they propose. Before referring to the Amendment which I have placed on the Paper. I should like to notice one or two remarks which fell from the hon. Gentlemen who have preceded me. It is not possible in the four hours' debate to consider all the remedies mentioned by the hon. Gentlemen; it is not possible to discuss the question of free education, free food, and free lodging for the people, neither is it possible to discuss the question of the wholesale revision of the land tenure in this country; but some of the remarks of the hon. Gentlemen very well deserve a passing notice. It seems to me that the objection which will be raised against free food and free lodging is that they would demoralize the working classes of the country. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid) indulged freely in the abuse of landlords, and he has proposed as a remedy a system of compulsory purchase. I know many hon. Members opposite look upon landlords as a demoralized and degraded set of men. Granting that they are, I take it we must imagine they are in the possession of ordinary faculties, and therefore is it possible to conceive that landlords as a general class would allow land to remain in pasture if it would pay them better to cultivate it? The hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) said that the population of the great cities and towns of this country is congested to a dangerous degree; and in that I heartily agree with him. The hon. Gentleman also pointed out that the agricultural districts are becoming gradually depopulated, because the people are migrating to the towns. In that I also agree with him, but I wish the House to remember what it is that gives rise to this state of things. I ask the House to bear in mind how dense the population is, and to reflect upon the alarming manner in which the population is increasing. The remedies suggested by the Mover and Seconder of the resolution, will do nothing to reduce the density of the population. The population now numbers 37,000,000. Let hon. Gentlemen put all their remedies into operation, and the population will still be 37,000,000. [Hon. MEMBERS: More.] Yes; it seems to me that if we indulge the people with free food and free education we shall put a premium upon an increase of the population. The population is now increasing at the rate of about 1,000 a day, or about 370,000 a year. In another 20 years 8,000,000 will have been added to the population of the United Kingdom, and any remedy for this state of things must take this increase into consideration. If there is no doubt as to the industrial and agricultural industries not being able to support the existing population, can there be any doubt as to their not being able to support the population 20 years hence? We have no Yellow River in this country like the Chinese have in their country, to carry off millions of people at a time, and, therefore, we must look upon it as an absolute certainty that the population in future will constitute a tremendous change to the social condition of the country unless something is done. The hon. Member for Nottingham has attributed a certain amount of the depopulation of the rural districts to the present land system; and my remedy will touch the agricultural labourers before they arrive at the towns. Let me direct attention to the state of things in Ireland. Since the great famine Ireland has gradually been turned from an arable into a pastoral country, because the cultivation of the land was not found to pay. The population has been reduced from 9,000,000 to 4,500,000, and that fact alone is a strong argument in support of colonization. This reduction of the population is exactly founded on the principle of my Motion. I desire the House to distinguish between colonization and emigration. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dumfries (Mr. R. T. Reid) sneered somewhat at emigration; but there is a great misconception about emigration and colonization. Emigration is simply the transportation of the labourers of this country to the Colonies, often without the approval of our Colonial Governments; but, on the other hand, colonization is not only transportation across the sea, but it is the placing our unemployed labourers and artizans in groups of families on the unoccupied and fertile lands of our Colonies, at a cost probably of £120 a family. Colonization does not mean the pauperizing of the working classes, but a good and sound profitable investment. In 12 or 20 years, too, the people so transferred will very probably become the owners of the land they till. Sir, the State Colonization which we advocate would be more or less based on the lines of the Crofter Emigration Scheme which has been started by the Government. Perhaps the House will allow me for one moment to place before it the scheme which the Colonization Committee spent two Sessions in elaborating, but which we have never yet had an opportunity of debating in this House. The first point in our scheme is that there shall be a Board composed of Colonial Representatives, as the controlling authority; secondly, that a fund shall be raised under Imperial guarantee, unless, indeed, the House suggests a better scheme by way of grants from the Exchequer; and, thirdly, that the Colonization Board shall have a veto on the families selected. Finally, the system under which colonists would become freeholders would be that the property would be mortgaged to the Government at a rent-charge of 4 per cent, extending over a number of years, at the end of which the colonist would become the freeholder of his plot of about 160 acres. I omitted to mention that the Colony which we should advoate as the field for colonization would, in the first place, be Canada, because the Government of the Dominion is favourably disposed and would give free grants of land. The sum required for an average family of five persons for transportation, settlement, and maintenance is from £120 to £150. There are no reasons on the face of that scheme why it should not succeed. It is said colonization would do too much because it would remove the backbone of the country. Now I take it that the backbone of the country are working men in honest employment earning wages. But those are men we do not want to colonize and who do not want to be colonized. On the other hand, there are thousands of unemployed crofters and artizans who at the present moment constitute a source of weakness rather than of strength to this country, and they therefore cannot be described as the back bone of the country. But they would be a source of strength to the empire if they and their families were transferred to the Colonies, where they would have elbow room, and where on fertile, virgin soil, in a healthy climate, they would have opened up to them a career of prosperity. Again, we are told that colonization would do too little, and that even if the mere bagatelle of one or two thousand families a-year were transported beyond the seas, it would make no sensible impression on the population at home. But does any other scheme which has been mooted give an opening for anything like one or two thousand families a year? Sir, this is a work which can only be done by the State. It has been asked, why not leave it to private enterprize? Four well managed colonization experiments have been tried since 1883, but in the last five years they have only succeeded in transporting 100 families. I believe the emigration of children has been conducted on a large scale, and I am glad that that has been the case, but of what use are these comparatively miserable results when thousands have to be dealt with? We have to deal with thousands of starving crofters and thousands of working men in the large centres of population who are unable to obtain employment. We have also to deal, on the other hand, with a vast stretch of Colonial property of something like 1000 million acres available for colonization; and how in such conditions can private enterprize do more than touch the fringe of the subject? Sir, it is not for me to go into the wider advantages which I claim for this scheme of colonization; but I should like for one moment to compare it with the scheme of migration or compulsory purchase. I know that the hon. Gentlemen who represent crofter interests have preferred migration to emigration to the Colonies; but where, I ask, are you going to get the land to which you can migrate the congested population of the Highlands? Why, before a generation has passed, every acre will be occupied. I can assure you that for every acre you have at home you can find hundreds of acres of fresh virgin soil in Canada and British Columbia and North Western Australia, which offer far greater advantages to the settler. It seems to me that the quantity of land which can be obtained, and the terms on which it may be secured, offer advantages far above any system of compulsory purchase at home. The two cannot be mentioned in the same breath. Moreover, where are you going to get the money for your migration scheme? Why, you will be taking the ratepayers' money, and using it in a most unprofitable experiment. By sending families to the Colonies you will be increasing the market for home-manufactured goods. Let me call the attention of the House to a few figures. The Germans buy English goods to the extent of about 8s. worth per head, the French 9s. worth, and Americans 10s. But the Canadian colonist buys £2 worth, South African £3, and Australian £8. In other words the successful colonist is worth from four to 16 times as much to the home producer as the foreigner. Therefore, the scheme of colonization which I advocate will be to the advantage of our home trade. From 1882 to 1885 a sum of £44,000 was spent in emigrating 9,500 persons from Ireland; but, unfortunately, 75 per cent of those have been sent to the United States, where they are lost to the Mother Country. As an instance of the value of colonization, I may mention that one family, sent out many years since, now numbers in its descendants over 500 people, and spends £1,500 or £1,600 annually on the purchase of British goods; thus, by sending people to our own Colonies, we increase our powers of employment at home. I think, Sir, I have shown that colonization is a direct practical remedy, and one worthy the consideration of the House. It will not only relieve density of population, but it will find an outlet for the unemployed labourers on the land who would otherwise migrate to the large centres of population. I quite agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite as to the deplorable contrasts of our social condition at present. On the one hand, we have a small minority who have more money than they know what to do with; on the other, we have a large majority engaged in a struggle for bare existence. If this state of things is allowed to continue, there may be a very rude awakening ere another generation has passed away. Colonization affords a direct and practical remedy for the overcrowded population; but time is of very great importance. We have in Canada a magnificent stretch of country, opened up by railway. If Great Britain does not utilize the vast tracts in her Colonies, alien nations will utilize them, and their place can never be supplied. Even now we find that Germans, Swedes, and Russians are settling on these lands, and we know from the fact that they send home more money than is sent out, that they are prosperous, and are inducing their friends to join them. At one time it was said that our Colonies were an incumbrance, and some political wise acres committed themselves to a policy of disintegration. But the sound policy is to people our Colonies with our own flesh and blood. I am glad, therefore, that the Government have set on foot, in a small way, a scheme of colonization for the crofters. I do not say this is the only remedy, but it is certainly one of the principal remedies for the great social evils to which the hon. Member who moved the resolution alluded. I should be glad to hear what the Government have to say on a subject which is well worthy of their serious consideration, and how far they purpose to extend their present scheme of Crofter Colonization. I believe we have here a really solid remedy, which will do a great deal to meet the difficulties with which we have to deal in this country, and one which I believe the Colonies will co-operate with us in bringing out; and, therefore, I urge the Government to give it their most careful consideration. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "this House fully recognizes the danger to the well-being of the State caused by the chronic poverty and overcrowding of great numbers of the people living in London and the larger cities and towns of Great Britain, and is of opinion that, in the consideration and development by the Government of some well-devised scheme of State Colonization, an effective and practical remedy for this state of things can be found, whereby an outlet for our unemployed agricultural class now migrating annually to our large cities and towns, and increasing the want and poverty there, will be provided, the large tracts of fertile and unoccupied lands in our Colonies will be profitably utilized, and the evils arising from over-population and agricultural depression at home will be relieved."—(*Mr. Seton-Karr.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. S. GEDGE (Stockport): I rise to second the Amendment. Of course, all of us will thoroughly agree with the hon. Gentleman who moved the original Resolution and with the hon. Member who seconded it, so far as they confined themselves to dilating upon evils which we all desire to alleviate. But it is an old oratorical trick to talk very much about the evils, and then assume that all who deplore those evils must agree in the value of the remedy which is proposed for them. It seems to me, after listening carefully to the speech made by the hon. Member for Nottingham, that the remedies which he proposed would tend to aggravate the evils rather than to prevent or diminish them. The particular evils which he pointed out in his Resolution were the depletion of the agricultural population and the congestion of our large towns, and his desire is to check the first and to relieve the second. But I find the remedies which are suggested in the Resolution are not such as might have been expected from the hon. Member. We find he suggests that because of the depopulation of the agricultural districts and of the congestion of the town populations, we ought to begin by giving free education and free meals. But we have seen that this can only be done economically when the meals are given in large quantities, and I think the hon. Member who seconded the Resolution has pretty well answered the suggestions of the hon. Member who proposed it, for he showed us most distinctly that wherever you give much charity there rents increase. Rents, like the prices of goods, depend upon the laws of supply and demand, and they can only be increased by the landlord, because a larger number of people go into the towns where the houses are situated. This increase is likely to occur in towns where, as has been suggested, charity is more freely distributed. These are the causes which lead to the rise of rents, and I maintain that if in any place you give charity, either in the form of free education and free dinners for the children or money gifts, there will come an increase of population in that place which will enable the landlords to raise rents. Therefore, the result of giving free education and free meals will be not to diminish or to relieve, but to gradually increase the congestion of the town populations. Well, we are told that a great deal of this evil has resulted from the introduction of machinery. I remember that many years ago I stood on the same platform as a fine old Tory of the good old school, who told us all the evils of the present day resulted from the introduction of machinery and the employment of capital. I have never heard that argument since until to-night I heard it from the lips of the hon. Member for Nottingham, and I did not expect to hear such an argument from him. He certainly is the last man I should have expected to attribute these evils to the introduction of machinery. He seems to have forgotten that at least as much labour must have been employed in the manufacture of machinery as is employed in the growth of corn. He told us it was a very bad thing that the agricultural labourers should leave their farms and go to the towns, because they might have grown corn which now had to be imported from abroad. But I should like to ask him, as a Free Trader, with what he supposes we pay for the corn which we obtain from abroad. Surely we pay for it with the things manufactured by these men. I should have supposed that the reason why these men came to the towns to work there instead of staying in their country villages producing corn was simply this—that they find they can earn more money by working in the towns than they are able to earn by growing corn, and therefore they can in this way obtain for the same labour more of the corn more cheaply in foreign countries. How, then, such a contention could have come from the lips of a Free Trader passes my comprehension. It seems to me that so long as we can make more cheaply machines, and buy more cheaply corn which is produced elsewhere, that is the most economical use we can make of our labour. Then we are told that the large landed estates must be got rid of in order to secure a more equable distribution of wealth. But as we were told last year by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at the present time there is a general tendency to diminish large accumulations of property and wealth, and to more equally distribute them; and, therefore, what is going on under the operation of natural laws should not be interfered with; it is better to allow it to proceed, rather than to interfere with it by artificial laws. The evidence before the Committee on Town Holdings shows clearly that the large estates are by far the best managed. The houses are the best on the large estates; there is less poverty on those estates, and if you want to find broken-down, wretched, ruinous, and disgraceful houses, you must look, not at the property of the large landlord, but at property belonging to very small holders. Another suggestion is that we should enfranchise the leaseholds. But if you do this, and houses are thereby made cheaper, which the hon. Member expects, but I do not, to be the result, you will gradually increase the populations in the large towns and you will intensify the evils which you now complain of. The only desirable way of removing the population of agricultural districts is to give them better places to go to. Why are the agricultural districts depopulated? Because it is found that you can raise the products of the country by machinery with far less labour than before. Therefore, the people of the agricultural districts, wanting employment, will come to the towns unless you provide them better places to go to. It is said that if you have small holdings you will have larger crops, and more labour will be employed. I venture to submit that almost universal experience is against that. True, a small holding which comes as an addition to the man's wages is a desirable thing to have. But the hon. Member opposite seems altogether to ignore that last year we passed an Allotments Act. [*Laughter.*] You laugh, but it is the experience of landlords all over the country that there are more sellers of land in the market than there are purchasers; it is the unwilling purchasers who are scarce, not the unwilling sellers. Landowners are only too ready to sell. But on this question of small holdings, I would point out that large capital produces large returns, and small holdings, comparatively, do not pay. Common sense and experience are against them. The system has been tried in France, where the women become prematurely old from hard work in the fields; and I hope it will to long before we come to that state of things. It is said—"Why should we expatriate these poor people?" If the Irish Channel were filled up and became fertile land, should we not gladly send people to occupy it? Why not, then, send them across the water? How small is the world now, through the introduction of steam and electricity! A man may leave his home and go to the most distant parts with more ease and comfort than in former days he could perform the journey to the North of Scotland or to Ireland. And a man is not expatriated who goes to any of our Colonies and continues to live there as a subject of Her Majesty.

MR. A. ACLAND (Rotherham): Mr. Speaker, I shall occupy the time of the House very shortly, and I would only say that if the Irish Channel were filled up, and people wanted to occupy it, they would go without any State loan to help them. Now, the question before us is based really on the relations between town and country, and I want to say one word or two on that subject—what is the influence upon our great towns of an influx from the country to the towns, and what is the influence upon the country districts of what is called depopulation? There have been some very interesting figures upon this question, and some are going to be published in a series of essays or articles upon the life of the poor, especially in the East of London. I believe the President of the Local Government Board has already seen, or has had an opportunity of seeing on this subject, the work of Mr. Henry Smith; and I have also seen published an interesting collection of statistics by Mr. Charles Booth, a most able statistician, who has done valuable work in connection with this subject. There are one or two points I should like to draw attention to in connection with this matter. If we take London, we find that there is a larger proportion of country-born people in London than there is of London-born people in the country. There are 37 per cent of country-born people in London, and only 28 per cent of London-born people in the country. But we have a constant movement to and fro. People talk much—too much—as if there was merely a flow from the country into the towns, and as if there was no back current. That is not the case. On the other hand some people imagine that the influx is much larger than it really is. If you take London as a whole, and look at the Census of 1871 and the Census of 1881, and if you simply take the births and deaths in London, and the natural increase of population which will come from that, and if you ask how large is the population in addition—namely, the men coming from the country, you will find that it is only about 100,000 in 10 years, or about 10,000 a year. I fancy many people thought the surplusage was very much larger than that. If you take East London, it will be found, if you calculate the births and deaths, that even a less number of people have come to it from the country in that interval of ten years. It is very important that we should have the facts of the case before us. It is perfectly clear that there has been a large influx from the country districts into various town districts, but not necessarily into London, and still less necessarily into East London. There has been great crowding into places like East Ham and districts of that sort. No doubt, enormous numbers of people have gone from villages to towns, but not necessarily to London, or even East London. They have been filling up all sorts of new, populous, *quasi* town districts; but, so far as we know, the agricultural population which has left during that 10 years is not large; at any rate, there has not been an actual decrease of the agricultural population of more than 1 per cent. Now I want to go to what the result of this has been upon London; and I take it that this is very much misconceived; in fact there are words in the Amendment just moved which I believe to be entirely incorrect, stating that the agricultural class now emigrating into the large cities and towns are increasing the want and poverty. I believe that is an entire mistake. I believe that if the country people did not come into the towns it would be a very serious and grave disaster to the towns and to the whole country itself. Now, there have been some very interesting figures on this matter. I will just take one or two of them. It has been shown that if you take the criminal class, the working class, and the poor dockyard labourers, you will find among them a larger number of people born in London, or of people who have been 10 or 20 years in London, than of country-born people. And if you take the stronger people, those who make the better wages, policemen, men employed in the building trade, or by contractors, or engaged on heavy jobs for big contractors, statistics show, and a very great deal of probable calculation shows also, that there is a very much larger proportion of country-bred people in those employments than of town-bred people. What Mr. Ogle said in his interesting Paper on this subject the other day is probably true. He says—

> "There is a constant migration into the towns of the pick of the agricultural populations, and there must result from this—as there is a higher mortality in the towns than there is in the country—a general deterioration of the whole, inasmuch as the more energetic and vigorous members of the community are consumed more rapidly than the rest of the population. The system is one that leads to the survival of the unfittest."

The best of our country people leave the country districts, leaving the weaker ones behind. They go into the town and they become London-bred people in time; and they bear children, who in their turn bear children, and become

London-bred people, and they begin gradually, more or less, to sink lower down. Well, if that is true, it is a very serious state of things; and it is from that point of view, the quality of the people in our towns, that I wish to treat the question. Now, Mr. Charles Booth has made a most interesting analysis of the condition of the people in the East End of London. Basing his inquiry on the work of the School Board visitors and other careful calculations, he has come to this conclusion. He divides the population into three portions, and he finds in the centre, about 40 per cent of fairly to-do working men, with regular standard earnings, and, above that 40 per cent, 25 per cent of a higher class of labour—an upper and lower middle-class. We have nothing to do with that 25 per cent, nor have we anything to do with the 40 per cent middle-class standard, wage-earning labourers. But we are concerned with the 35 per cent which are below the 40 per cent. These are the poor, some very poor—all of them more or less poor. Mr. Ogle takes these 35 per cent, and he subdivides them. He takes the lowest class, which is called the dangerous class, and he says about them that their proportion is very small indeed—not more than 1 or 2 per cent. Above that there come the shiftless people—people who are very often not fit to work if they could get it to do, and who have got into the habit of leaving work even when they get it. This class is about 12 per cent. Then there comes the intermittent earning people, who suffer from every kind of depression. These are 8 per cent. Then comes the small wage-earning people, whose wages are very small. Well, Sir, I think it is a serious thing, although, for my part, I take no pessimist view of the matter, although we are making such slow progress, that there should be 35 per cent of the population of East London who may be called poor, or very poor. There are at least 100,000 of that class who are constantly verging on want and deep distress, and probably the number is something like 300,000 in London, taking them as a whole. What we have to consider is the best way in which we can lessen the number of these people. First of all, we have to bear in mind that they are not the lowest in the scale, but that there is a drift which works down from the other classes in all sorts of ways. It is the popular idea that a great many of the country people who come into large towns, and are in a miserable and wretched condition, at once join the lowest class. I believe that that notion is untrue, although there is no doubt that some of them get into the lowest class at once; but the bulk of them have this advantage, that however poor may have been their food, they have lived in the fresh air and are men of stronger build, with more power and muscle than the town men with whom they come to compete. It is sad to think that many of the modern inventions and rapid developments of industry on which we pride ourselves have only tended to add to the class which goes drifting downwards. One of the rising American economists, General Walker, has said—

> "If we consider the population of the most squalid section of any city we can only conclude that, contrary to the assumption of the economists, the more miserable men are, the less, and not the more, likely they are to seek and find a better place in society."

The rapid changes of fashion and the innovations made in modern improvements, have a tendency to weaken the industrial worker through no fault of his own. I have nothing in the shape of a complete remedy to offer for these things. Our society is so complex, and its evils are so difficult to deal with, that I always suspect the man who has a panacea to offer. But I think that in our country districts more might be done than has yet been done to retain some of those men whom we do not want to go into the towns, and to improve the quality of some of those who stay. With regard to the reform of the system of land tenure, I am glad to hear the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries say it is so simple a matter. Some years ago the present Premier, speaking of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that Mr. Goschen wished to make the transfer of land as easy as the transfer of Consols, which showed that Mr. Goschen knew more about Consols than he knew about land. Even, however, if we had free land we should not have got to the bottom of this question. I hope that more will be done in the villages to encourage the people to live there. There is a Committee now sitting on the question of small holdings. Any artificial attempt to create them would be an attempt that is not very likely to succeed, but if that same Committee could encourage tenants to purchase where it is desirable to purchase, and encouraged a few independent artizans and labourers living in the villages to buy cottages for themselves if opportunity were offered, I think they would be doing a better thing. Having had considerable practical experience myself, I would say that many of our model villages, though they bear evidence of the philanthropy and good-will of many of our landlords, are by no means the villages which are producing the vigour and the force and the independence in our country people that is wanted, and I do not hesitate to say that I prefer to the model village the open village which is not under the kindly and benevolent despotism of one big man. I look to the time when local authorities will have power to see whether there are men who wish to buy and own their cottages, and that is the reason why I urge the question of village government. On the subject of State loans, I think we had much better try all we can to help the poor people by private moneys before we attempt to run the risk of failure from the State. State workshops have not yet succeeded anywhere. It is of no use to invite the chainmakers to form a large local Industrial Board and then fancy they are going to succeed. They must begin on a small scale. Some hon. Members and others are making an effort in that direction, and I have enough faith in hon. Members and others to believe that they will find the few thousand pounds necessary to make a small co-operative beginning. If a co-operative factory can succeed on good business lines, I have no fear of more money not being forthcoming. On the question of the hours of labour we must be sure that we have the working men on our side, and I should like to see an inquiry into what the great mass of actively employed working men think on the subject. In this House we may do much not so much by legislation as by showing the people that the eyes of the House of Commons are open to many evils that can be removed. On that point I confess I am cordially, heartily, with those who are working with the hon. Member. But should not the House have done something during the last few years to lift these people who have sunk up to the level again; to encourage those more capable workmen who are banded together in unions; and encourage and make their lives more hopeful, more helpful, to those below? Closely connected with these evils, the source of much of the evil is the question of drink. I say, without hesitation, that for this Government to go out of power without having attempted to deal with this question of drink will be to commit a very serious breach of duty. You had an opportunity last year; and if you thought your proposal right, and that it was approved by the country, why did you not put it through? For some reason the Government ascertained that the country did not think it right, and so they dropped their proposal. But they lost a great opportunity; they might have settled the question of compensation and everything else. I know that some extreme temperance men think we can get rid of that altogether, but I am not one of those. Sooner or later there must be compromise; and the time having been settled over which compensation should extend might have been running out; but now the question that lies at the root of this difficulty may remain untouched for four, five, or six years. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech at Edinburgh in 1885, said that if Sir Wilfrid Lawson's scheme was capable of being carried to an end it would do more to empty our workhouses than all the schemes of Mr. Jesse Collings. Upon that precise point I will not express any opinion, but I do agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the great importance of temperance and education in regard to this social problem. In proportion as we strengthen the fibre and increase the intelligence of our population, we shall certainly increase the wealth of the country. Doing that, we do the best thing we can to remedy one great source of evil. I think we are all agreed. I do not think the Government need fear the country, but what is their position? The new Code does not, so far as we can see, alter the curriculum, there is no proposition for evening schools, and the Technical Education Bill twice mentioned in the Queen's Speech is now dropped. It is disappointing to find so little has been done, but I only hope something will be done before the Government go out of power. It is our duty, with our advantages derived from the rapid industrial development of the last 50 years, to lessen the grievances of the poor who have suffered so much. That is the duty lying before us. To remedy the evils of drink and to increase the means of education may seem but small remedies to apply to all these troubles, but at least these things are something tangible we can do, and, I say, let us put our hands to the work as quickly as possible.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. W. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): The hon. Member for Nottingham at the commencement of his remarks introducing this Resolution, expressed a hope that he had not called the attention of the House to matters unworthy its careful consideration. I will venture to say, apart altogether from the value and the importance of the question raised, the hon. Member's Motion would have been more than justified if it had produced nothing besides the speech to which we have just listened. The hon. Member who has just spoken has succeeded in raising this discussion to a higher level, and has brought to the consideration of this question an amount of practical knowledge, combined with careful, intelligent research, couched in such language that the House has listened with interest, and our thanks are due to him. In that speech the hon. Member made more than one useful suggestion; and, if I do not refer to them in detail, I hope he will understand it is not because I do not give them the importance they deserve, but because the time at our disposal does not allow me to do so. With regard to his references to the Land Question and to the conditions existing in rural districts, I do not feel called upon to defend those conditions, but I do feel bound to express my belief that the great majority of landlords are most desirous so to alter the conditions of rural cottage tenants as to give them a feeling of greater security and independence, and that they have the same rights, and privileges with other citizens of this great country. The hon. and learned Member for Dumfries, who seconded the Resolution, did not, I think, approach the subject with the same amount of knowledge as the hon. Member for Rotherham, and he introduced in his references to landlords as a class an amount of acrimony hardly necessary in a debate of this kind. I can hardly think my hon. Friend was really serious in some of his statements. First of all, my hon. Friend said there was a constant flow of labourers from the country to the towns, and he followed that by a statement that the labourers could not get cottages. If, however, agricultural labourers were constantly going to the towns, and if fresh labourers were not taking their places, there must be vacant cottages, or else the cottages in which labourers formerly lived must have been pulled down. The statement that labourers could not procure cottages is not, I believe, borne out by evidence, and, in my opinion, the hon. Member for Nottingham's contention that there is a constant flow of agricultural labourers going to the towns cannot be maintained. No doubt some few years ago, when the depression in the agricultural interest was heavily felt, there was a considerable flow of agricultural labourers into our towns, and that did for a certain time affect the rate of wages in those towns. But I have been unable to discover that there is going on at this moment anything that can be accurately described as a flow of labour from the agricultural districts into the towns. Having this debate in view, I addressed questions to the general inspectors of the Local Government Board whose business it is to make themselves acquainted with the circumstances of the people in their respective districts, and from all parts of the country the same answers have come to the questions addressed to them. The contention that there is at this moment a large flow of labour going into the towns is not one that can be altogether maintained. Now, let me turn to the speech of the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst). The hon. Member expressed the hope that this great subject would be considered in no Party spirit, and that there would be a general desire to discuss it so as to arrive at a remedy. I hope the desire of the hon. Member has been fulfilled. I think it has, and that everybody has tried to avoid partizan spirit. But I confess that, though I listened very carefully to the speech of the hon. Member for Nottingham, I did not find during the whole hour and a quarter he was speaking—and I am amazed when I consider this—that he advanced a single argument in support of the main part of his proposal, or made any suggestion as to remedy. The only suggestions he made had reference to free education and free breakfasts, and that the other towns of England, Scotland, and Wales should follow the example of Glasgow in providing adequate accommodation for the housing of the working classes. So far as his observations upon free education go, I do not propose to reply to them, for they do not come within my purview, nor do I think they can reasonably be considered a cure for the evils he referred to. But in regard to the housing of the working classes, and the praise bestowed upon Glasgow for what has been done in this respect, coupled with a recommendation to other towns to do likewise, I may say that in a great number of our cities and towns there has been going on for a considerable time a continuous effort to increase and improve the accommodation for the working classes. Then the hon. Member told us that the introduction of machinery had caused much suffering; and if there is any argument or deduction in his statement, it means that he regards the introduction of machinery as a great misfortune; but I suppose he is not prepared to advocate a return to the hand loom and hand labour. When I turn to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Dumfries, I find that he devoted a considerable part of his speech to the power of landlords to deal with the land in their possession. The hon. Member stated that there was a large amount of land going out of cultivation in consequence of the caprice of owners. It would be extremely foolish on the part of the landowners if that were the case with land for which they could get any rent. I am aware of the fact that large tracts of land are out of cultivation, for small parts of which offers have been made, but not accepted. But it would be impossible in such cases, if the small lots were let, to let the remainder. If an owner had 1,000 acres, he could hardly be expected to let 50 acres of the best land, and thereby make it impossible to obtain a Return for the remaining 950. The hon. Member challenged me to say how many labourers had grown into small farmers. Well, I cannot give him the number, but this I will undertake to do, if he or any other hon. Member will accompany me to that part of the West of England with which I am best acquainted. I will undertake to introduce him to a considerable number of farmers who have been labourers, and who occupy buildings, some small, some larger. I could give him many names that occur to me at the moment, but of course that would convey no information to him. I can assure him, from absolute personal knowledge, that the movement has been steadily going on, converting labourers into small occupiers. The hon. Member for Nottingham has stated that he cannot accept the statistics of pauperism as an adequate test. I admit that the House is not invited to consider the question of actual pauperism, but rather the state of those who are struggling on the verge of pauperism. I would not have it imagined that I and those who sit on these Benches are wanting in sympathy for this large class of persons. At the same time, in speaking of this subject, it is desirable to avoid exaggeration, and I cannot agree that the statistics of pauperism are without value in considering this question. The careful study of these statistics, when the growth of population is borne in mind, will furnish abundant sources of satisfaction. Take the case of some of our large towns. In Manchester, for example, in 1870-71 the proportion of paupers to the population was 56·2 per 1,000; in Bristol it was 70·1. Now, in 1889, in Manchester the proportion has fallen to 27·2, and in Bristol to 53·7. In Liverpool, in the same period, there has been a decrease from 57·3 to 30, and in Birmingham from 36 to 20·3. In Hull the fall has been from 30 to 26, and in Plymouth from 60 to 36. No doubt part of this improvement is attributable to the administration of the relief laws, but this is not the only cause, and it is extremely satisfactory to note that this diminution has gone on side by side with a large increase of population. If the condition of other countries is examined, it will be found that the same process which has gone on in this country with respect to our urban and our rural population is also to be found in action there. It certainly is so with respect to France and Germany. I do not believe that there is any cause at work in this country tending to the increase of pauperism. Then the hon. Member urges that the Government should take some action, though he did not precisely indicate what the Government could do. If it could be shown that any temporary cause is at work, such as existed during the Cotton Famine in Lancashire, when for a time large masses of the population were on the verge of starvation, there might be cause for Governmental intervention to avert the distress that threatened the population of that part of the Kingdom. The causes which lead to this depletion and the causes which lead to this overcrowding of our cities are parallel. Every argument addressed to me to-night goes to show that where the agricultural labourer goes into the town, it is because he can get a better livelihood there than in the country. Does anyone conversant with the land contend that the holding out the hope of a small allotment or a small farm in the country will induce the agricultural labourer to stay at his own village if he has ambition, and feels that he is fit for something better? [*Cries of* "Yes."] I am perfectly certain that anyone acquainted with our agricultural labourers must know that neither the promise of land nor anything else will keep the strong and active young fellow in his village when he is sensible that he has in him the capacity of doing better. Young men go into towns because they know that in the towns there will be wider scope for their energies. This so-called depletion of the agricultural districts is talked of as something new; but the fact is that it has been going on ever since railways have afforded young men the means of going into the towns, and since the spread of civilization has opened up to them the prospect of doing better than they can in country districts, and we have no right to stop them. I hope the House will not think that I desire to see agricultural wages run down, or the country deprived of its bone and sinew. Not at all. I desire to keep a sufficient number of the young men in the agricultural districts. The hon. Member opposite has not endeavoured to establish the truth of the proposition that the influx of agriculturists is driving labour out of the towns. The Resolution refers to the depletion of the agricultural districts, and the contention I have endeavoured to establish is, that while there is undoubtedly a steady flow of a certain number of young men from the country into the towns, where they get better wages, there is nothing which can be regarded as depletion in the agricultural districts, or which calls for the interference of Parliament. No doubt, in the towns, we are confronted with a great difficulty, and some cure, if possible, ought to be found for it. But the House has not had recommended to it to-night any cure which it can wisely adopt. The hon. Member for St. Helen's (Mr. Seton-Karr) has represented that there ought to be a scheme of emigration undertaken. Well, I had an opportunity of seeing in the course of last year some of the Scotch crofters who were sent out to Manitoba, and nobody can visit those men in their homes without being struck by the fact that emigration or colonization, if properly carried out—if the people are properly selected and properly placed—must commend itself to those who wish to see the condition of part of the community improved. But the House is aware that a Committee has been sanctioned to inquire into a scheme of emigration. At first, it was intended that the Committee should inquire only into the question of emigration of the crofters, but a great deal has been said as to the emigration of others, and the Government see no reason why the scope of the inquiry should not be extended so as to embrace other parts of the country. It is the intention of the Government to appoint a Select Committee at once for this purpose, and then abundant opportunities will be afforded to my hon. Friends to bring forward all the arguments they can in favour of colonization. But whether it is colonization or any other cure for the sufferings of those who are crowded out and unable to get employment, the Government wish well to those who will aid them in sifting to the bottom any proposals which may afford hope of a satisfactory result. I regret that I have been obliged, following the example of others who have addressed the House to-night, to omit reference to many points in the wide area of subjects travelled over. I should have been glad to have touched on many of the points referred to to-night by hon. Members, for the purpose of emphasizing some and controverting others, but I am conscious of the fact that the period allowed for this debate is rapidly coming to a conclusion, and I do not desire much longer to trespass upon the time of the House. I venture to express an earnest hope that the House will not, by the adoption of a Resolution or by any other means, either give an opinion or offer advice which, instead of assisting the classes whose interest has been under discussion, will have a different result altogether. The working classes of this country are justified in looking to this House for advice, guidance, and help when they want it. Those who suffer, whatever the cause may be, are justified in demanding that this House shall pay attention to their sufferings, and, if possible, alleviate them. The responsibility resting on the House is a great one, and I entreat the House to be cautious before they embark in a policy which instead of doing permanent good to the working classes might do them harm, by raising in their breasts hopes which would probably never be realized, and by creating anticipations which would only prove to be false. I believe that if this Resolution in its present form were adopted it would do much more harm than good for the classes in whose interest it is proposed; and, therefore—while having the deepest empathy with the sufferings of the people whose case has been brought under review—because, in the first place, the hon. Member has failed to establish his proposition, and because, in the second place, while calling on the Government to do something he has failed to tell them what they ought to do, I ask the House to reject it.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton): If we wanted an illustration of the extraordinary way in which this House wastes its time, it could be found in our proceedings this afternoon. Something like five hours were frittered away at the commencement of the Sitting on a discussion as to the stairs in Westminster Hall, and we have been limited to only four hours for the discussion of this, one of the most important questions that ever engaged the attention of the House of Commons. In answer to the hon. Gentleman the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, who says the hon. Member for Nottingham has failed to make out his case, I challenge anyone to dispute that there is chronic poverty and congested and overcrowded population in the towns, and that this state of things constitutes a grave danger. The hon. Gentleman has submitted an array of figures to the House, but there are a few figures which he will find it hard to get over. For instance, the population of England and Wales has increased during Her Majesty's reign 42 per cent; the population of London has increased 108 per cent; Liverpool, 105 per cent; Birmingham, 138 per cent; and Sheffield, 180 per cent. Where has that population come from? It came from the rural districts into the towns. I should not, however, like the House to take a pessimistic view on this question. While there has been a great increase in the extreme poverty in our large towns, there has been a great improvement in the position and well-being of the working classes as a whole. I attach great importance to the statistics which have been given with regard to pauperism; and I am within the mark when I say that during the past 50 years pauperism has decreased 50 per cent. I will not go into the question of the decrease of crime; but I say this—that, as a rule, the wages of the artizan class have increased, the hours of labour have decreased, and the purchasing power of wages has increased; and the artizan class, as a whole, are in a better position to-day than they were 50 years ago. I think that we are bound to admit that. Well, side by side with that—owing, perhaps, to our prosperity and the enormous development in manufactures of all branches—there are collected in our large towns a large number of people who are almost worst than paupers, living in a condition in which human beings ought not to live. It is, I admit, impossible for legislation to regulate wages or create a demand for labour; but legislation can deal with the conditions under which these people earn their wretched living and the conditions under which they live. In the first place, legislation can alleviate the conditions under which they earn their living by a wise and firm and liberal extension of the principles of the Factory and Workshops Acts, bringing not only factories, but private houses in which industry is carried on, under its operation. We may also deal with the question of the labour of children and women. I am prepared for drastic measures in reference to the labour of children. By depriving the house of the labour of a child we should, no doubt, be inflicting a temporary evil, but we should at the same time be producing a future great good. A man and his wife have no right to live on the earnings of little children. Then, I should like to know whether the President of the Local Government Board believes that the existing sanitary legislation with reference to the houses of the people, even in London, is being carried out? Why should we allow large landlords and others to draw gigantic rents from miserable hovels? I do not say that Parliament should fix a rent, but it has a right to say that a landlord shall not put a human being into a house which is not fit for human habitation. It is a public nuisance as well as a private wrong, especially in London, where exorbitant rents are demanded. There is no legislation strong and wide enough at present to deal with poverty, but much may be done in the direction of improving the dwellings of the poor, and I am sure that the House, without distinction of Party, will support the Government in bringing such legislation forward. Many of the evils complained of to-night may be removed by legislation, and I deplore the fact that the Government have decided to negative the Resolution, which merely states undoubted truths. I appeal to the House and the Government to avail themselves of this opportunity of publicly endorsing a fact as to which there is no dispute, and of recognizing a duty which devolves on us, and also of averting what I believe to be a national danger as well as a national disgrace.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Because the Government are not prepared to accept all the language of the Resolution, it must not be supposed that they are not in sympathy with the object which the hon. Member has in view. I agree with much which has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman, but I do not believe it is so much a want of legislation in connection with the housing of the poor which is felt as it is a defect of administration, connected with the melancholy condition under which the poorer classes dwell in our large cities. So far as London is concerned, I am satisfied that there lie in the hands of the County Council powers of a very large character, which, if properly exercised, will do much to diminish the evils of which the poor have so much reason to complain. The Government are anxious as hon. Gentlemen can be to see the condition of the poor in our larger towns elevated, and to add to their happiness and comfort; but they believe that by accepting the Resolution on the Paper they would be assenting to a proposition recognizing that the depopulation of the agricultural districts is going on at a large and rapid pace, which they do not admit. It is proposed to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the subject of emigration.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: What are the terms of the reference?

*MR. RITCHIE: It will be in the following terms:—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into various Schemes which have been proposed to Her Majesty's Government to facilitate Emigration from the congested districts of the United Kingdom to the British Colonies or elsewhere; to examine into the results of any Schemes which have received practical trial in recent years, and to report generally whether in their opinion it is desirable that further facilities should be given to promote Emigration; and, if so, upon the means by and the conditions under which such Emigration can best be carried out, and the quarters to which it can most advantageously be directed."

MR. J. MORLEY: Are we to understand from the reference that this Committee is to inquire, for example, into the congested districts in Ireland?

*MR. RITCHIE: The United Kingdom.

It being One of the clock a.m., the Debate stood adjourned, and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 13.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 11.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, April 3, 1889.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

TRUST FUNDS INVESTMENT BILL.

(No. 6.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*MR. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.): It is a remarkable fact that until the year 1859 there was absolutely no Statute which dealt with the subject of Trust Investments, and Lord Eldon pointed out, a good many years ago, that it was necessary for trustees to follow, as they best could, what was the rule of the Court of Chancery. It was not until this century that trustees were authorized to invest in mortgages, and in 1859 Lord St. Leonards introduced a Bill, by which the power of trustees was extended to Bank Stock and East India Stock. Further legislation followed in 1860, and in 1867 an Act authorized trustees to invest in any Stock the interest of which was guaranteed by Parliament. In 1871 Parliament decided that investments might be made in Stock issued by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and in 1882 there was a further intervention by Parliament in the Settled Land Act, which authorized trustees to invest capital in what I may call, speaking generally, first class Railway Debenture Stock. In 1884 the late Lord Advocate brought in a Bill, which applied only to Scotland, but which gave a wide power of investment to all Trust Funds in Scotland. There has been an enormous increase in the amount of Trust Funds, and no one but the Chancellor of the Exchequer can have any correct idea of the rapidity with which these funds are increasing. I believe they are increasing at the rate of millions a year, and side by side with that fact, the old-fashioned Trust Investments have diminished, or become undesirable. Government securities, happily, have been to a considerable extent paid off, and, quite apart from that fact, they have been largely taken up by the Court of Chancery and the Savings Banks authorities, who hold Consols to a very considerable amount. As to mortgages, they are not as much favoured as they were, on account of the great depression of landed property. Legislation is required in order to make the law of England and Ireland uniform; in the next place, to make it more simple, and, thirdly, in order that trustees may be allowed a wider range of investment than they have now. There is no doubt that the fall in the value of money has worked with extreme hardship in a great number of cases. Funds have been set apart in the belief that the interest produced from them would be an adequate provision for a widow or a child; but in many instances the investments are now unsatisfactory, and it is not unreasonable that Parliament should give a wider range and a wider choice. This is, no doubt, what the creator of the Trust would himself have done, could he have foreseen the events which are now happening. In its main features the Bill does not come before the House without some authority. Last Session the House of Lords passed some clauses in the Trustee Bill which agree with some of the provisions of the measure, and Lord Salisbury, on the Third Reading, stated that it was desirable to pass the clauses which gave to trustees an increased power of investment, and that he should be sorry if the Bill were rejected. It came then before the Standing Committee, by whom it was passed, without an adverse opinion being expressed against it. The present measure deals with Trust Investments very much on the lines of the Bill of last year. It consolidates all the existing law, repeals all the old enactments, and puts them in one section under separate heads; it enlarges the list of securities so as to include first-class Debenture Stock authorized by Parliament and the annuities granted by the Indian Government; it also authorizes the inscribed stock of Corporations and County Councils; and it deals with the rights and duties of trustees in the matter of the purchase above par of Stocks which are redeemable at par. It is in every way important that some law should be laid down to govern the action of trustees in these matters. At least they are entitled to know what their position is, and they should not be left to the risk of having a Court of Law declare that they have exercised their discretion in a wrong way. There are two securities that are not included in the Bill—the Colonial and the Irish Tramway Securities. Colonial Securities raise a question of great interest and importance, but it is a question which, if necessary, can be raised in Committee and there dealt with. Personally, I did not feel myself at liberty to introduce it into the Bill. The same remark applies to the Irish Tramways Stock. It is a question in which many of the Members for Ireland take a deep interest; but it is a small question in amount, and can easily be dealt with in Committee. There is one other matter. I may be asked how I propose to deal with old Trusts and with Trusts where there is an express limitation as to the nature of the investment. It is not proposed by the Bill to override any express provision in the Trust, but unless there is an express provision the trustees are to have power to invest the trust money in accordance with the provisions of the Bill. I do not suggest that it is a perfect measure. It is a measure that will require, and, if it is read a second time, will doubtless receive considerable discussion; but I trust I have satisfied the House that it is a matter which is ripe for legislation, and that it is a matter with which the House of Commons ought to deal. I ask the House, in moving that the Bill be read a second time, to recognize in it, at least, an honest attempt to grapple with a difficult question.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Cozens-Hardy.*)

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I do not for a moment pretend to argue that there is no need for some Bill relating to the Irish law of investments. Not long ago Mr. Justice Kay declared his conviction, derived from long experience, that there was great need for a radical reform of the law in regard to Trusts. The hon. and learned Gentleman who has moved the Second Reading of the Bill sees very clearly the necessity for some kind of amending Act in regard to one part of the question, but he only touches a very small portion of one side of it; and he admits that, even with regard to that small portion, he has left out a not inconsiderable part. He suggests that the Bill may be amended in Committee in the direction of the enlargement of the powers which it proposes to confer; but, while taking care of the trustee, the hon. and learned Member loses sight altogether of the beneficiary. These Trust Funds are increasing every year. There are many millions of property in the hands of trustees in regard to which the people for whose benefit the Trusts were executed and for whose benefit the trustees have accepted the duties of trustees have practically no information or control. To bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to Trusts, to enlarge the power of trustees, to extend their discretion, and to minimize their responsibility, and at the same time to leave unprotected the interests of those who are to benefit by the Trusts, certainly seems to me to be a patchwork and niggling way of dealing with the question. The Bill has evidently been drafted by someone skilled in the drafting of Bills, but it is equally apparent that it has been drafted hastily; and I fear that, if we read it a second time and take it to a Committee, the only result will be a considerable waste of time. It will either be rejected, or it will be so imperfectly amended that it will do more harm than good. The measure of the hon. and learned Gentleman is imperfect and ill-digested; and it is undesirable that it should be allowed to stand in the way of other important questions which urgently demand the consideration of Parliament. The second Act of Lord St. Leonards practically gave everything the Bill of the hon. and learned Member desires to effect, because the 11th section provides that trustees having power to invest in Government or Parliamentary securities may invest in any other securities in which funds under the control of the Court of Chancery may be invested. From time to time the powers of trustees in this respect have been considerably enlarged, and last year the hon. and learned Gentleman brought in a Bill upon the lines of the present measure. That was a remarkable Bill. It protected trustees who had committed a breach of trust at the instance of the beneficiary of the trust, even if she was a married woman, and it further gave trustees the benefit of the Statute of Limitations. One would think that ought to have satisfied the hon. and learned Gentleman. But he comes again this year in the same way as last, and he brings in this Bill, which, as I said before, is fragmentary. Even putting aside the question with which he has undertaken to deal, he mentions in the Schedule a number of different Acts dealing with Trust Funds, but he does not say a word about a number of other Acts. Now, in dealing with Colonial Stocks or Irish Tramways, why, if he includes all these Acts I have mentioned, does he not include 34 & 35 of Victoria, chap. 27? If this was a Consolidating Bill there would be something to say for it; but were this Bill passed, the whole of our law would be distributed over a number of different volumes, and would require consolidation just as much as ever. There is another Act, four years later than the one I mentioned, by which trustees who are authorized to invest in the Debenture Stock of any railway or any other company may invest in Debenture Stock named under the Act—that was, the Local Loans Act of 1875—giving a further enlargement of the powers of trustees. There was there, of course, the same limitation that the hon. Member says he wishes to put in this Bill—namely, that the investment should not be made if there is a contrary intention expressed in the deed of trust. That goes as a matter of course; you find that in every case. Again, in 1880, there was an Act further enabling trustees to invest in bonds or debentures of Indian railways, or in securities of the United Kingdom. Why does the Bill of the hon. and learned Gentleman not propose to deal with those Acts, and others which I have not had time to note down? He is dealing in an unequal and fragmentary sort of fashion with a matter which, if dealt with at all, ought to be dealt with in a large and comprehensive manner, after full consideration of the circumstances of the case. Then, again, with regard to the hasty drafting. There is a Definition Clause put in the first section, and in it we have such terms "as the purchase of freehold ground rents or fee farm rents or rents reserved on leases for lives renewable for ever." These are securities which the hon. and learned Gentleman desires trustees always to be empowered to possess. If freehold ground rents are to be recognized as proper investments, why not improved ground rents? Then, again, with regard to leases for lives renewable for ever. This is a kind of holding, or interest, which exists very much more extensively in Ireland than in this country, but the hon. and learned Gentleman seems to treat them, in the case of Ireland, as fee farm rents. Only three weeks ago this House decided that it would not read a Bill a second time because it purported to deal with one class of prisoners, while another class of prisoners was not dealt with. By parity of reasoning, inasmuch as this Bill deals only with certain interests, while there are left out other interests more important and more numerous, I do think the House ought not to consent to the Second Reading. There are a great many different kinds of trustees—some who may be allowed almost unlimited discretion, and others of a different character. There is the honest trustee who suddenly dies, leaving his accounts in a muddle. There is the easy-going trustee, who leaves everything to his co-trustee; there is the speculative trustee, and the fraudulent trustee. With regard to each of these four trustees, what is the protection which the beneficiary has now? It is perfectly true that in a case of breach of trust he can take his remedy in the Courts of Chancery. But what satisfaction is that to a beneficiary who has had reason to suppose that his property was in a perfectly healthy condition, and in the hands of a perfectly intelligent trustee? The very uncertainty of trusts now leads to heartburnings and to litigation, which always costs a great deal of money. It is perfectly true, also, that a *cestui que trust*, if he has reason for doubt, can get an injunction. But that is almost as unsatisfactory and expensive as bringing an action for actual breach. That is not what you want. What you want is to provide some machinery by which there may be a constant check upon the trustees in the investment and use they make of the funds placed at their disposal. I wish, when the hon. and learned Gentleman referred to Amendments which might be made in Committee, he had expressed his willingness to accept some Amendment by which periodically the trustees would have to tell the beneficiaries how the funds really stood on which they depended for subsistence. Under the circumstances, and for the reasons I have mentioned, I beg to move that the Bill be read this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Arthur O'Connor.*)

*Mr. TOMLINSON (Preston): It is with some reluctance that I have come to the conclusion that it is my duty to support the Motion that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I admit that the Bill deals with a subject of great importance. I concede the principle which underlies the Bill of my hon. and learned Friend—namely, that trustees should be allowed as much latitude as may be possible in investing their Trust Funds consistent with the safety of the funds. But I feel very strongly that we ought never to lose sight of the fact that the safety of the Trust Fund is the first consideration. I believe our first duty is to see that in any changes which are made, nothing is done to impair the security of the funds on which widows and orphans rely. There are two classes of cases within the purview of this Bill. The first is where the creator of the Trust has given no directions as to the investments. The second is where such directions have been given less wide than the provisions of the Bill. If that second class had been concerned only this Bill would hardly have been introduced. I take it that the principal object of the hon. and learned Gentleman is to deal with those cases in which no express directions have been given for investment. But where directions of a limited character have been given we ought more especially to keep within the strictest bounds of absolute safety. We have, further, a right to ask that those who desire to alter the law should make up their minds what is the alteration of the law required. This is an attempt to separate the sheep from the goats and to divide investments into two kinds and to say that all the investments which we put on this side are safe, and that all other investments cannot be looked upon as safe, and are, therefore, excluded from the favoured list. And I say we have a right to expect that when distinguished and competent adviser comes forward with proposals dealing with this subject there should be an element of finality and completeness in the proposition they offer for our consideration. Now, comparing this Bill with the clause in the Liability of Trustees Bill of last Session, I find that some securities were included in that which are not in this Bill, and *vice versâ*. The hon. and learned Gentleman has alluded to the reasons which actuated him in leaving out of this Bill a very important element that was in the Bill of last year—namely, Colonial Securities. But I think he sat down without leaving upon the House any definite impression as to what his opinion was with reference to including or excluding these securities. He says it is a matter for the Committee. Then we have some securities introduced for the first time under the head J., which seem to require some fuller explanation of Clause F. than he has given. What reason is there for naming these securities and omitting others of a similar character? We begin, then, with great difference of opinion among competent persons as to what ought to be introduced into this Bill. This measure will go to some form of Committee, and what will be the consequence? The question of what Stocks are to be introduced will be settled one way or the other. Then in some future year someone will come to this House and say—"You have admitted securities which are of a doubtful character, but I have here a security which is equally good. Whatever reasons there are for including Colonial or other Stocks belong equally to this security, and I shall bring in a Bill and claim to have the law altered so as to introduce my security." I ask whether it is in the interests of Trust Funds that the question of what fund the trustee should be enabled to invest in should be left open to successive efforts at legislation? I contend that, whatever provision we make, it ought to contain the elements of finality and completeness. I should like to test the question of safety with reference to one or two of the objects which are put in the Bill. I take the case of the nominal or inscribed Stock of municipal boroughs—I leave out the question of County Councils as pertaining more to the future. Will anyone say, who knows the condition of municipal boroughs at the present time, that a Stock of that kind is necessarily a safe investment? The security for the Stock is the borough rate. Many boroughs borrow very largely, and the larger the debt the higher will be the rates. The amount of the rate is very often an important element in the prosperity of a borough. There may come a time when the burdens are too heavy to bear, at any rate when some Corporation Stocks may be immensely depreciated in the Market. I venture to think you could not put down Municipal Stock as offering a security unimpeachably safe. It is said there is a precedent for this in the case of Metropolitan Stock. But that is a case *sui generis*, because the provision enabling the trustees to invest in that Stock was inserted in the Bill by which the Stock was created, and Parliament had the power of defining the condition on which the money should be raised, and all the other circumstances which go to the consideration whether it is a safe security. Then there is the other case of freehold ground rents and fee farm rents. It is true that the conditions on which alone by this Bill trustees are allowed to invest are such as in an ordinary case would make a safe investment. But there are cases in which the conditions stated in the Bill afford no criterion of the safety of the investment. A case came recently under my notice in which I found that a ground-rent, which satisfied all the conditions of the Bill, was far from being a satisfactory security. If there are these objections to the Bill, then I think we should very carefully consider whether we ought to read it a second time; for I think we ought to even err on the side of leaving out a safe security rather than allow a doubtful one. I must confess I viewed with considerable alarm the discussion on the clause of last year's Bill in this House in Committee last year. It seemed to me that many Members entirely left out of sight the safety of the money. Some hon. Members seem to me not to appreciate at all the object of that Bill. The tone of the debate was this—"Let us be as generous as we can; let us include as many Trust Funds as we can, to give a wide scope of investment to trustees." It is that kind of vicarious generosity which is so prevalent now that seems to indicate to me a point of danger in passing a Bill of this kind through Parliament. Now, Sir, having expressed my desire to extend the power of the trustee as far as can safely be done, it is only right that I should say a word or two as to my alternative to the present Bill. The alternative I would suggest is, to proceed on the lines on which the extension of the trustees' powers of investment have already been effected by allowing all trustees to invest in securities on which cash under the control of the Supreme Court is allowed to be invested. If any further extension is required in the powers which were originally vested in the Court of Chancery, I would allow anyone interested in any particular security to go before the Court and produce such evidence as might satisfy a judicial body that it is a proper fund in which trust money can be invested. I do not think we have any reason to doubt that that power would be carefully exercised; and in cases where those who have the control of any particular investment could not satisfy an impartial judicial body, it would be far better that, even if the proposed investment were a safe one, it should be left out of the list than that the risk should be run of putting trust funds into an insufficient security. I beg leave to second the Amendment.

MR. F. MACLEAN (Woodstock): The Bill now under discussion is to my mind an important beneficiary measure, and one that will be watched by every trustee in the country. The speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down seems to me to have been one that would have been better addressed to the Committee stage of the Bill, than to the Second Reading. What we have to consider is, the question of principle involved in the Bill; and that question is this: whether wider powers of investment than they now possess should be given to trustees by this House. In endeavouring to arrive at a conclusion on this question it is not immaterial to see what was the past policy of Parliament in this direction. In old days—the days of Lord Eldon, for instance—it used to be thought that the only safe investment for trustees was Consols or Government securities; bnt as trade increased, the policy of Parliament has been materially to increase the power of investment on the part of trustees. This is clearly exemplified in the five Statutes mentioned in the Schedule of the Bill, which it is proposed to repeal merely for the purpose of re-enacting all the Acts of Parliament under which Trust Funds may be safely invested. That is the principle, and the only objection has come from my hon. Friend opposite and the hon. and learned Gentleman below the Gangway. As to the former, he admitted that the widest latitude should be given to trustees in the matter of investments, assuming that they were of a safe character.

*MR. TOMLINSON: What I said was, as great latitude as could be given, provided always that the condition of safety was regarded as the first consideration.

MR. F. MACLEAN: I agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman, who said that the first thing to be considered in relation to all Trust Investments is the safety of the Fund. If you look through the Investments mentioned in the Bill, I venture to say that most of them are of a sound character.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (MR. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Not all.

MR. F. MACLEAN: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman. What I said was "most of them," not all; and if the Bill gets into Committee, there are some of the Funds mentioned in which I think it would be advisable not to authorize trustees to invest; and there are some that are not mentioned — possibly Colonial Securities —in which it might be advisable to authorize trustees to invest. I think, however, that, taking the Investments named as a whole, they may be regarded as safe investments of a first-class character. I do not propose at this stage of the Bill to go into detail with regard to the Investments, because those matters will be more properly discussed in Committee; but I would point out that my hon. and learned Friend opposite has made a suggestion which I think would be a very unfortunate one for the trustees if it were acted upon. He says in substance that it would be better, instead of laying down in statutory enactments the securities in which trustees may invest, that trustees should have power to go to the Court of Chancery and ask its sanction to particular investments.

*MR. TOMLINSON: That was not the suggestion. What I intended to suggest was that where the proprietors of the funds thought they were good investments they might be allowed to go to the Court and satisfy the Court that those investments were good.

MR. F. MACLEAN: That is in substance what I have said, and I think it would be a most lamentable thing to give the trustees that power. Again and again in my experience have I seen small trust funds, when they come into the Chancery Division to ask for a change of investment, swallowed up by costs to the extent of half a year's income.

*MR. TOMLINSON: I do not say that the trustees should go to the Court, but those who have the control of the funds, such, for example, as a municipality.

MR. F. MACLEAN: I am only dealing with the alternative suggestion of the hon. and learned Member. The hon. Member for Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor) took exception to the Bill as one which was not for the benefit of the beneficiaries. With all due respect for the hon. Gentleman's opinion, I submit that the whole object of the Bill is the benefit of the beneficiaries. I have no doubt that if those persons who are in the position of trustees were acting for themselves, their inclination would generally be to invest all the funds at their disposal in Consols so as to get rid of any responsibility that might otherwise attach to their action, and I say that the Bill is conceived, not in the interests of the trustees, but entirely in the interests of the beneficiaries. The fact has been alluded to that there is an enormous increase in the trust funds of the country, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that if the *cestui que trusts* were consulted on the point there would be not a few of them in favour of the suggestion that means should be given to them of making investments of a first class kind. On the grounds I have put before the House, I trust it will give a Second Reading to the Bill, leaving it open to the House at a later stage to say what should be the nature of the investments in which trustees should embark.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I think, Sir, that the House ought to approach this question with very great deliberation. The Bill proposes to give to trustees powers which the men who create the trusts had no conception whatever would be given to trustees. A person who creates a trust could not have foreseen that Parliament would interfere and say that powers not expressly forbidden should be given to the trustees. When he gives directions, he would naturally suppose that those directions would be carried out faithfully by the trustees and would not be interfered with by any *ex post facto* Act of Parliament. The hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Second Reading said the object of the Bill is to give to trustees a wider range than they are at present allowed for the investment of property, and he justified it on the ground of the fall in the value of money, which has inflicted great hardship on the *cestui que trusts.* Undoubtedly there has been a very great fall in the value of money, but that has affected to a much larger extent trusts created during the last four or five years, during which the fall in value has occurred, than it has affected trusts created many years ago. As far as Consols are concerned, the hon. Member was doubtless accurate in his description of the hardship which has been incurred, but if the hon. and learned Gentleman carries his memory back he will find that investments made 40 or 50 years ago, or even 20 years ago, and which had anything of a permanent character, produce almost the same income now as they produced when the investments were effected. The capital sum invested in this property is of much greater value, but the income derived from the trusts is nearly the same as it was at the time of their inception. The object of the present measure is to afford facilities for the investment of trust property in securities of a first-class character, and the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just addressed the House has said it will be watched with the greatest interest by sanguine beneficiaries in all parts of the United Kingdom. There rests the danger of legislation of this character. There is undoubtedly throughout the country a very great desire on the part of persons who possess limited incomes that their trustees should be allowed greater facilities for investment, in order to get a higher rate of interest. I have a recollection of one of the recent periods of excitement, when clergymen, professional persons, and widows were induced to invest in speculative securities which hailed from Honduras and other parts of the world. Those investments were, however, most unfortunate in their results. Therefore I would recommend Parliament to be exceedingly cautious in dealing with a measure of relaxation of this character. I think there is a very great danger in raising expectations which certainly cannot be realized with safety. It has been rightly observed by my hon. and learned Friend behind me that the great object we ought to secure is the absolute safety of Trust Funds. Any legislation which imperils the safety of those Funds is legislation for which we should incur grave responsibility if we gave it any support whatever. It seems to me that if we proceed at all to legislate on this subject, Sub-section O of Section 3 contains almost all that Parliament would be justified in providing at the present time. That sub-section provides that investments may be made in any Stocks, Funds, or other securities which are under the control of or subject to the Court of Chancery. If the Bill goes into Committee, it ought to be examined with the greatest care, with the view of making the beneficiaries as secure as possible in the enjoyment of their incomes.

*MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I would remind the House that in 1884 a Bill was passed for Scotland which proceeded very much on the lines of the present measure. That Act gave a considerably increased range of power in the matter of investments, and the result of the working of that measure has, I believe, been entirely good. The result of the working of the Act during the four or five years which have since passed has, I believe, been very satisfactory. It was, at the time, considered of great advantage to the beneficiaries. Something has been said in the course of the debate as if it were for the interest of the trustees that they should have a large range of investments. But I say it is thoroughly immaterial to them whether the range is a large or a small one; they have only to consider the interests of the beneficiaries. The problem to be solved is how to hit the proper medium of a fair return. Remember that the beneficiaries are generally persons who have no other means of earning their own livelihood, and it is necessary that the trust funds on which they depend should give a fair return, accompanied by a proper measure of safety. Hundreds of securities which do not give a large return have, of late years, proved to be accompanied with considerable risk, and one result is that those which were considered prime investments before now hardly yield a fair return, or are attended with a degree of hazard. There ought to be no hazard. In Scotland there has not been the disadvantage which it has been suggested would result from the exercise of these powers; but there has been found this advantage, that the modest income of very many persons deriving their livelihood from trust funds has been increased from 2¾ to 3½ per cent, and sometimes more. It is needless to point out how great a benefit that is. Before the Scotch Bill was introduced, persons familiar with what are regarded as adequate and fair trust investments carefully considered the enlargement of the range of investments, and, as far as I have heard, there has never been any objection taken to it on the ground that it was too large. There have been some objections to it on the ground that it unduly restricted the powers of trustees. It does seem to me to be an experience at all events worthy the consideration of this House, seeing that it has worked well in Scotland for between four and five years. Something was said by the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury as to giving powers which the settlor had not himself given. I venture to think that the great majority of settlors will be quite content to have the investment left to the wisdom of Parliament. Unless settlors desire a distinctive range of securities—and in that case they could give expression to their wish—it ought to be left to the law, and I believe to say the settlors will, as a rule, be quite content with what the law allows to be done. It is really not doing any violence to their wishes if the law finds, in course of time, that the range of investments is unduly restricted and should be amplified. It has been a common experience of late years that there has been an enormous increase of wealth in this country which has been invested in the funds until it has become almost impossible to get a fair return. If the trust yields an inadequate return, then Parliament must try that the medium of a fair return in income security for the capital should be ascertained. I do not propose to say anything with regard to the particular investments mentioned in this Bill. As to some there may be a difference of opinion; as to others there may be none. But I may, perhaps, be allowed to say that if a Committee of this House should extend the powers beyond those which are given by the Scotch Act of 1884, I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Lord Advocate will consider whether by a short measure—for I do not think it could conveniently be done by an amendment of this Bill—Scotland could not be kept *pari passu* with England in this matter. I repeat I do not think it would be easy to adapt this particular Bill to Scotland, because the customs of that country differ so much from those of England. I do not ask at this moment any expression of opinion from the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I only desire that he will undertake to consider the matter.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I think with the right hon. Gentleman that the question which he has just raised is premature in one sense; but if Parliament should decide on sanctioning an increased range of investments for England, we may fairly see how we can best take advantage of that decision in order to amend the law of Scotland. But the difference of opinion in this House which has been elicited by this debate is so great that I cannot usefully enter into any engagement other than a most general one. I agree with my right hon. Friend in thinking it is not convenient, looking to the existing Scotch legislation dealing with trust estates, to have an incidental reference to Scotland in a purely English Act. If the general opinion of Parliament is in favour of extending the powers of investment beyond the limits of the Scotch Act of 1884, the proper plan would be to have a specific Scotch Act. I rather gather, Sir, from the right hon. Gentleman's observations that he shares my view that we have to look, to a large extent, to the convenience and easy working of the legal practitioner, and I think it would be unfortunate if, by a chance and casual reference to Scotland in an English Act, we imposed on Scotch practitioners the necessity of entering into the perusal of an English Act. I have no more to say. I do not understand the right hon. Gentleman expects me to do more than indicate my concurrence with the view that whatever powers are considered by Parliament as proper to give to England should be extended to Scotland, not by an incidental reference in a Scotch Act, but rather by a specific enactment following upon the English decision.

*SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury): I have risen to urge on the Government the desirability of allowing this Bill to be read a second time. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his Conversion Scheme last year, he struck a very severe blow at persons dependent on limited and fixed incomes, and a great many representations were made to Members of the House that great injustice would be inflicted upon such persons if their income were lessened by perhaps one-sixth, in consequence of the Conversion Scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Indeed, the lessening of the income from 3 to 2½ per cent imposed a very serious burden on *cestui que trusts.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave a promise at that time that the subject should be fully considered, and a hope was also held out in the debate on Lord Herschell's Bill dealing with the duties of trustees that there should be some consideration given to the question, which was then urged upon the House by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton. I want to see some fulfilment of that promise. I admit it was not a definite promise, but there was a pledge on the part of the Government that some consideration should be given to the case of these persons, and I desire to urge on the Chancellor of the Exchequer the claims *cestui que trusts* to have their income maintained at its former level. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the guardian of the public, and he is to some extent opposed to any alteration in the law affecting investments in the interests of the public, because, as I understand him, he says that if we diverted the natural flow of investment into Consols we should thereby, to some extent, run the risk of lessening their value. I hope, on the other hand, to see the National Debt diminished and the value of Consols increased thereby. But while the Chancellor of the Exchequer speaks in this sense, he must consider the public from every point of view. I would rather, for my part, see the burden fall on the public as a whole than that it should fall on the persons least able to bear it—namely, the persons of small fixed incomes, who are generally without the power of earning more money for themselves. We must see that no injustice is done to them by the Conversion Scheme. At present, however, an undue proportion of the loss falls on them. Indeed, the general taxpayer gains by the Conversion Scheme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has the right to point to it as a great success; but, after all, the sufferers are those persons whose incomes have been reduced by at least one-sixth in consequence of it. Now, we want a remedy for this state of things, and we are throwing no extra burden on the taxpayer generally by providing that the opportunities of investment shall be enlarged and increased without risk to the *cestui que trusts* and liability on the part of the trustees. We can guard against that risk, and can find securities in this country which will pay 3 or 3½ per cent with perfect safety. If that can be done it ought to be done, because it would do no injury to the general taxpayer. This is the proposition we are making to the Government. This is not, as suggested by the First Lord of the Treasury, a Bill in relief of the trustees. From our point of view it does not protect the trustee. He may be a very selfish person, but he can take care of himself. He may say—"I will only invest in Consols, as I do not suffer if I only get 2½ per cent." The person we are considering is the person who is receiving the income, and we desire that he shall not bear an undue portion of the burden created by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Conversion Scheme. I think we are bound to see that he obtains a percentage somewhat similar to that which he received when Consols paid 3 per cent. I do not object to the very proper desire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to guard the public. What we want is that the receiver of the income shall be regarded as the person principally interested. We shall not interfere with the value of Consols: they will be maintained at their level; and if the person who creates the Trust chooses that the funds shall be invested in Consols, let him say so. All we are asking is that there shall be an increased opportunity of investment; that we shall allow trustees to invest without incurring personal liability in certain defined securities. It is our duty to see that the securities are not speculative, and we must not allow investments in securities which pay high interest, but we can find securities which will not only pay a somewhat higher rate of interest to the beneficiaries, but which will be good security for the trustee. I do not wish to go into details in discussing the Second Reading of this Bill, but I think the First Lord of the Treasury spoke somewhat without consideration when he took exception to some of the securities mentioned in the 3rd clause of the Bill. He said he doubted whether trustees should be allowed to invest in the railways of Ireland; but under Lord St. Leonard's Act, 22 and 23 Vict., there is power, under prescribed conditions, to invest Trust Funds in railways in "Great Britain or Ireland," so that this provision, which was pointed out as a fatal defect in the Bill, which embodies a consolidation of the present powers of investment, coupled with some enlargement, does not go beyond the present law. I would suggest to the Government to allow this Bill to be read a second time. There will be no attempt on the part of those in charge of the Bill to take one step which will not meet with the sanction of those who are the natural guardians of the taxpayer and of those who ought to protect the beneficiaries and the private individuals who receive the income. We have already admitted that there should be some compensation to those who have suffered grievously by the change of the 3 per cent investment into a 2½ per cent, without any fault of their own, and without such a diminution of interest being in the contemplation of the settlor. On the whole, believing that this Bill marked a step in the right direction, I hope the Government will not throw any obstacles in the way of its being read a second time.

Mr. S. HOARE (Norwich): The discussion which has taken place this morning proves, I think, the great interest taken in the subject involved in this Bill. When the Conversion Scheme of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was discussed, there were many of us in this House who, like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury, realized that the incomes of a vast number of people would be materially affected by that scheme, and we thought at the time that Government would introduce some such Bill as is now before the House, to give an opportunity for those interested in Trust Funds invested in Consols to reinvest them, so that they should not be such heavy losers as they necessarily were under the Conversion Scheme. I supported the Conversion Scheme most warmly; but I always felt that a Bill giving enlarged powers to trustees was a necessary sequence of it. Consequently, I have taken some little part in bringing this Bill before the House. Now, in speaking on it, I feel somewhat at a disadvantage, because almost the whole of the discussion hitherto has been from a legal point of view, and I desire to approach it from a business standpoint. I must say I was rather surprised at the objection of the hon. Member for Donegal, who thought that the House ought not to waste time by pressing forward a Bill of this kind. I conclude that the hon. Member is not interested in funds invested in Consols at the present time, and he cannot know, as many hon. Members know, of cases where the reduction in the rate of interest on Consols has materially affected those interested in the Trusts. I regard the Bill as affording a protection to beneficiaries, because it enables them to get a larger income without, as we believe, sacrificing their security. With reference to the suggestion that the securities named are not all that could be fairly taken, I quite realize that objections might be found to that list, but I should be prepared to satisfy the Committee that each investment is good and sound, and that they will enable tenants for life to enjoy increased investment from Trust Funds, while not getting more than their proper share of the income arising from the funds invested. Every precaution is taken that life beneficiaries shall not benefit at the expense of those who follow. I can assure hon. Members that great care has been exercised in the selection of the list of securities embodied in this Bill. My hon. Friend the Member for Preston said he did not like the policy of dividing the goats from the sheep. I can assure him the securities named are all sound and suitable for trust investments.

*Mr. TOMLINSON: My point was that the Bill assumes to be able to determine that the securities named in it are sound and that all others are not.

Mr. HOARE: And I shall be prepared in Committee to prove that each proposed investment is sound. The hon. Member alluded to the proposal to allow investment in Eastern Bengal Annuities and other Indian Railway Stocks. Sir, the very insertion of the provision shows how very carefully the interests of the beneficiaries have been studied. We have only included those annuities where there is a Sinking Fund; so that at the end of a given period the capital of the annuity is repaid. The hon. Member also objects to investments in Corporation Stock. Why, at the present moment these Stocks stand at a very high price in the market. It must be remembered that they are under the control of Parliament, and the policy pursued in the selection of investments in this Bill has been, as far as possible, to take those which are under the control of this House. Therefore, Inscribed Stock has been put in, and we believe it to be a good, sound, and safe security. Excepting what has been said by the First Lord of the Treasury, I do not think any real objection has been brought against the Bill. The First Lord, perhaps rightly, looks upon the Bill as too wide, but, at the same time, his remarks show that some Bill of the kind is required. As to the course to be pursued to-day, I hope the House will pass the Second Reading, as I believe that everyone will feel that some such Bill is necessary. I do not say it is a perfect Bill, but I believe it is a good Bill as a groundwork for consideration. I hope the Government will support the Second Reading of the Bill, and that it will then be referred to a Select Committee which, I think, will consider the questions involved with greater advantage to the country than a Committee of the whole House. I think trustees and others interested in Trusts would be better satisfied to have investments settled in that way than by the Judges of the Chancery Division of the High Court. Even Lord Salisbury himself has said that the Judges are not the best tribunals to settle investments. The Bill, if passed, would be a great advantage not only to beneficiaries, but to trustees who now have the responsibility of selecting investments.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I should not like to see so very wide a subject dealt with without ample opportunity for consideration and debate. I should like to see the power of the Judges of the Court of Chancery revised in regard to Trust Investment, and I should like to know definitely whether if the Bill goes to a Select Committee it will have power to deal with the delicate question of interfering with the powers of the Judges; I should like also to know whether the question of colonial securities will be dealt with by the Committee? I think that the Bill as it stands ought not to be allowed to pass a Second Reading, and I should only agree to its being so passed if the whole subject were capable of being dealt with in Committee.

Sɪʀ GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I have a very strong feeling that the principles impressed on the House by the First Lord of the Treasury should have very great weight with hon. Members, and I shall not vote for the Second Reading unless those who are responsible for advising the country on such matters—namely, the First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—advise me to support it. I am rather surprised at the suggestion to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. A Bill of this kind went to a Standing Committee last Session, and that body treated its proposals very unfavourably, and therefore the desire to send it now to a Select Committee seems to show an anxiety to escape the criticism of the Standing Committee. I think if the Bill is referred to any Committee it should be a Standing Committee. If investments are put into a list in this Bill they will be ear-marked as first-class investments, and the whole influence of the Stock Exchange will be used to put others into the list.

Mʀ. E. W. BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby): I wish to join in the appeal to allow the Bill to be read a second time. I am bound to say that in looking through the list of securities, it contains many which I, for one, cannot approve. At the same time, I think there can be no question that there is an ever-increasing necessity for extending the powers of the Court of Chancery in regard to trust investments, and I therefore hope the House will agree to the Second Reading, on the understanding that the Bill should then be referred to a Select Committee, to consider the Schedule of authorised investments. I think the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken could not have heard the very excellent speech of the Lord Advocate, which showed that we might follow the example set by Scotland in this matter on prudent lines. I trust that the Government will not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, but will let it be referred to a Select Committee. I am quite aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Conversion Scheme succeeded in a most extraordinarily satisfactory manner, and, perhaps, therefore, he will not now be less inclined to consider the possibility of carrying out the objects aimed at by this Bill.

Sɪʀ H. DAVEY (Stockton): I earnestly hope the Government will see their way to accept the proposal to read the Bill a second time, and refer it to a Select Committee. The object of the Bill has been somewhat misunderstood. It has been treated as a Bill to relieve trustees; but that is a mistake. The primary object of the Bill to collect into one Act the securities in which trustees may invest. At the present time such securities can only be ascertained by searching through a number of Acts of Parliament, the subject-matter of many of which is of an entirely different character. For instance, an Act which enables the Metropolitan Board of Works to create Stock gives power to trustees to invest in it. The Bill will, therefore, be very useful; and in my opinion, if it did nothing more than this, it ought to be read a second time. But the Bill goes beyond this, and proposes to enlarge the scope of investment now allowed by law. I quite agree with the First Lord of the Treasury that we ought not to hold out any encouragement to trustees to speculate with Trust Funds. That is a sound principle; but, on the other hand, I think the House will agree that the true policy is to give the beneficiary as full an enjoyment of the produce of a Trust Fund as is consistent with the safety of the capital of the fund. The First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) has objected to certain securities mentioned in the Bill, but the right hon. Gentleman was particularly unfortunate in his selection. I believe that the two securities which the right hon. Gentleman specifically mentioned were real securities in England, Wales, and Ireland, and Debenture Stock in English and Irish Railways. I must say that it requires some courage to state that there is wild speculation in investing money in the Debenture Stock of English Railways. The Bill applies to Irish as well as English trustees, but it does not propose to give power to invest in securities which the Will or Settlement expressly prohibits. With regard to the objection raised by the right hon. Gentleman opposite to investments in Irish mortgages, I would point out that, even if the Bill does not pass, the present law gives power to invest in mortgages in England, Wales, or Ireland, and the First Lord of the Treasury, in objecting to this security, is objecting to the existing law. By the 32nd section of the Act which bears the name of Lord St. Leonards, a trustee, unless expressly forbidden, is permitted to invest Trust Funds in mortgages in any part of the United Kingdom. I presume that Gentlemen opposite will agree with me that Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, and I may observe that the objection to Irish mortgages which the right hon. Gentleman made comes with rather a curious aspect from the Leader in this House of a Party which tells us that its great object is to encourage the introduction of capital into Ireland and to restore confidence in the country. I may say, however, that I have hardly ever seen a Settlement or a Will which does not contain a clause expressly forbidding investments in Irish mortgages. The objection of the First Lord of the Treasury on this point is an objection to the present law. Perhaps the right hon. Gentlemen is not aware that trustees are not allowed to invest on more than a certain proportion of the value. The right hon. Gentleman's other selection of what he deemed a mild speculation was particularly unfortunate. He objected to authorizing trustees to invest in debentures of railway companies which have paid dividends during ten years. Perhaps the right hon. Gentlemen is not aware of the rule made by the Judges of the High Court for the investment of funds under the control of the Court. I hold in my hand a copy of the last Order, dated November 14, 1888, and signed by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, the Master of the Rolls, and four other Judges. The Order provides that cash under the control of the Court may be invested in debenture, preference, guarantee, or rent charge stocks of railways in Great Britain or Ireland which have for ten years next before the investment paid a dividend on ordinary shares. But, Sir, Parliament has already sanctioned this itself, because I find that in an Act which goes by the name of that wild speculator and revolutionist, Lord Cairns—the Settled Land Act 1882—capital money which has arisen from the sale of settled land is allowed to be invested in, amongst other things,

> "the security of the bonds, mortgages or debentures of any railway company in Great Britain or Ireland and having ten years next before the investment paid a dividend on its ordinary shares."

The objection made by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) seems to me to go too far, because the more you restrict the power of investment by trustees the more you will raise the price of the stocks in which they were allowed to invest. I can quite appreciate the motives of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in wishing to restrict the area of Trust Investments. I can quite understand his wishing to restrict such investments to the Consols which bear his name. But surely the rights or interests of persons beneficially entitled under Settlements ought not to be cut down in order to maintain the price of Government Stock. That seems to me a consideration that ought not to enter into the view of the House in this matter. The more you enlarge the area of Trust Investments the less effect they will have in raising or varying the price of particular Stocks. I think that any gentleman who has had experience in these matters will agree that the list of securities named in the Bill is such as will be found given in any ordinary well-drawn Settlement or Will without special instructions, and they are all securities of a public character and guaranteed. I believe the Bill will be found strictly beneficial both to trustees and to *cestui que trusts*, by enabling them to make the most beneficial use of their funds consistent with due security.

*MR. GOSCHEN: My right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. W. H. Smith) did not offer any objection to the Bill on the ground that it might be detrimental to the interests of the Public Funds. He carefully abstained from urging that argument. My hon. and learned Friend (Sir H. Davey) says it is an error to suppose that this Bill was introduced to any extent in the interests of trustees, but on reflection he will, I think, see that his argument points to its being a useful Act for the relief of trustees, as affording them a better and surer light, and giving them an indication of what is called the "wisdom of Parliament." I am not at all prepared to share the view, however, that testators would be perfectly prepared to leave the care of their settlements, and the future of those in favour of whom they make settlements, to be decided by the "wisdom of Parliament." The discussion shows that Parliament may make a mistake, and there is great force in the objection of the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell). The Bill has two currents in its favour. There is the pressure of the *cestui que trusts* and also the strong pressure of those who wish to see their securities take a higher rank as being sanctioned by an Act of Parliament as fit for the investment of Trust Funds. If a Bill of this character be passed there will be no undertaking which will not do its best to induce Parliament to put its name and title on the favoured list. And would it not be necessary continually to revise the list which Parliament in its momentary wisdom might make? Reference has been made to Lord St. Leonard's Act, enabling trustees to vary Trusts, so that money invested in Consols may be invested in real securities. Lord St. Leonards acted on the Parliamentary view of that day, which was that capital might be advantageously converted into land; but it has since turned out that mortgages are not the excellent security they were supposed to be. The wisdom of Parliament was at fault, and it would almost make some settlors and testators turn in their graves could they know that while they gave directions for safe investment in Government securities for those in whom they were interested, the wisdom of Parliament authorized investment in mortgages which had turned out to be a bad security and had not paid the interest expected. The objection has been taken to the Bill that there are easy trustees and fraudulent trustees as well as honest trustees. An easy trustee cannot go far wrong now, for this Bill will give him a large choice of investments, the list of which is as long as the calendar, and of which the easy trustee would be likely to choose the more dangerous rather than the safe class. The fraudulent trustee might, under this Bill, sell out of a safe investment and put the Trust Funds into other investments which would promote his own speculations or his own interests. He might, if he had a number of houses of his own, invest the funds in them.

Sir H. DAVEY: I think the right hon. Gentleman will at once admit that that would be a gross breach of trust, and that a trustee who did that would find himself at once in difficulties in the Chancery Division.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Of course I bow to the decision of the hon. and learned Gentleman, but it seems to me that there would be no dishonesty whatever in making such an investment, though it would be extremely injudicious. I fully admit that there are some things in this Bill which are advantageous and which it would be expedient to consider. There is the question of the consolidation of the law; and I think it is expedient that the undertakings which are authorized by Parliament as investments for Trust Funds should be dug out of the various Acts in which they are embedded so that Parliament should know to what extent the number of securities have already been increased. Furthermore, I think it is right we should settle the moot point as to what is the liability of trustees with regard to investments above par. Again, I trust that if the Bill is referred to a Select Committee or to any other Committee, the question as to whether it ought to be retrospective or not will be considered. If I make a settlement on my daughter and say that the investments must be made in Consols or Indian Securities or in some other guaranteed Government Stock, and I die, she may at once put pressure on her trustees to change the investment to mortgages on land in Ireland. I object to my views being set aside by Parliament the moment after I have made a Settlement. I think Parliament would be embarking on a dangerous course in laying down what are safe investments and what are not, although there may be something to be said in favour of such a course. Still, the Trusts and Settlements which have quite lately been made, and been made with a full knowledge of present circircumstances ought not to be set aside under the pressure of the *cestui qui trust* who may naturally be wishful to increase his income *pari passu* probably with an increase of his family. The Government will not object to the Second Reading of the Bill, but their view is, that the Bill should certainly be referred either to a Select Committee, or to a Standing Committee similar to that to which the Bill of last year was referred. The Government would prefer to take time to consider which of the two causes would be best.

*MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N., Lonsdale): Having some knowledge of some of these investments, I think it right to offer a few remarks. I desire particularly to refer to the Stock mentioned under the letter K. I daresay many hon. Members are not aware what the true significance of that Stock is, or in what sense it cannot be said to be a safe and proper investment for Trust Funds. I had occasion a few years ago to object to the investment of some Trust money in this particular Stock, because, although it is described as bearing a guarantee from the Secretary of State for India, although the Company does receive 5 per cent from the Secretary of State, it does not follow necessarily that the 5 per cent goes to the holder of the Stock. Take the case of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. It may be that that railway's stock stands at a high premium indeed, but I remember when it was little above par. It may descend to that level again. That will be in consequence of a falling off of traffic which may occur through panic. If the traffic receipts fall so that the income will not permit of a dividend being paid without the assistance of the Secretary of State for India no money would come to the beneficiaries. I believe it is not known to investors that that is the position of the holders of the Stock of some of the Indian railways. I agree with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) that the Bill will open the door to speculations on the Stock Exchange, and this, I think, ought to cause hon. Members to pause before they let the Bill pass even a Second Reading unless there is a strong recommendation to the Committee to which it is referred that the list of the securities should be seriously cut down.

*MR. ELTON (Somersetshire, Wellington): I cannot but share the fears which have been expressed about the Second Reading of the Bill, although I have great confidence in the judgment of the hon. Gentlemen opposite who have spoken in its favour. I am quite willing it should be confined to Settlements made after the date of the passing of the Bill if that is the feeling of the House, but what I rose particularly for is to point out that there are some investments mentioned in the list which the House ought to encourage by every means in its power. I refer especially to the investment in Borough Stock. It is very difficult for any of the large boroughs to get powers inserted in their local Acts to enable trustees to invest in their Stock, although I know from personal experience that there is a great demand by trustees of *cestui que trust* to invest in such Stock. But there are some Stocks in the List which ought not to be there. Take the case of freehold ground rents. I have not the slightest objection to freehold ground rents, but we ought to prevent the investment of Trust Funds in them, for it is well-known they may become insecure. It is necessary the Bill should go to a Committee in order that that particular investment may be struck out.

*MR. SWETENHAM (Carnarvon, &c.): I have heard with the greatest pleasure that the Government do not propose to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill, which I regard of the greatest importance, not only to trustees, but to the *cestui que trusts.* Some observations have been made as to the hardships that occasionally would occur to widows and orphans if the Bill passes. But there are hardships under the law as it at present stands, and it is with the view of removing these hardships that I intend to support the Bill. I deprecate in the strongest manner anything like allowing trustees to invest funds in speculative securities, but all the observations made by the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment appear to me to be of such a character that they can be very properly dealt in Committee. I have not heard any real objection to the principle of the Bill; and what we have now to deal with is the principle of the measure. In Committee it will be the province of the House to investigate carefully what are the securities in which it shall be lawful to invest trust money. I should like a clause inserted providing that in all cases where it is possible the consent of the *cestui que trusts* must be had before the trustees can invest in the securities. It has been suggested that the operation of the Bill should be confined to Settlements made after the passing of the Act. I cannot help thinking there would be very great hardships under the present system if the Bill is not allowed to have a retrospective effect. To use the language of the Mover of the Second Reading, the Bill will be greatly conducive to simplicity of knowledge, not only on the part of the trustees, but on the part of the *cestui que trusts.* If it is known that Parliament in its wisdom has directed that certain securities may be considered safe, that will be conducive to the peace of mind of the persons interested in the investment of Trust Funds. I do not know any measure which will prove of greater practical importance than this, and therefore I shall heartily support its Second Reading.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time: committed for Wednesday, April 10.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER (SCOTLAND) BILL. (No. 13.)

Order for Second Reading read.

*Mr. A. ELLIOT (Roxburghshire): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I do not pretend that those who promote this legislation are not anxious to extend the provisions of the Bill to the whole of the United Kingdom, indeed I should have been better pleased had the measure of this kind which applies to the whole Kingdom stood first on the Paper to-day. But the precedence of Bills is a matter which hon. Members cannot settle for themselves, and it is by the fate of the ballot that this Bill, limited to Scotland, now comes on first for discussion. I have noticed amongst the Notices of Objection appearing on the Paper, one in the name of the hon. Member for East Donegal (Mr. A. O'Connor). I certainly should be the last to complain of any Irish or English Members taking part in such a discussion as this. We must all recognize that Acts of Parliament dealing with limited geographical limits are nevertheless of extreme importance to many persons living outside those limits. There are hundreds and thousands of the countrymen of the hon. Member living in Scotland, and therefore it is perfectly right the hon. Member should make a statement here to-day. I do not wish to look at this Bill solely in respect of its limited character, but still it is due to us in Scotland to remember that the Marriage Law has not been the same in Scotland as in England and Ireland, and it may rather startle some hon. Members to find that the Bill states in its preamble that the law in Scotland on this subject is at present doubtful. It is not clear that a marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister is at the present moment illegal in Scotland. In England at present there is no doubt whatever as to the illegality of such marriages. Since Lord Lyndhurst's Act was passed in 1835, marriage with a deceased wife's sister is absolutely illegal, but that Act, which extends to England and Ireland, expressly does not extend to Scotland, and we must find the Scotch Law on the subject elsewhere. It will be admitted that, according to the Confession of Faith, which is the standard of the various Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, affinity is for all practical purposes equivalent to consanguinity, and that, therefore, undoubtedly such marriages would be contrary to the provisions of the Confession of Faith. But in 1567, when the Scottish Legislature determined to get rid of many of the restrictions which in Roman Catholic times had been placed upon marriages between relations, the Act provided that henceforward marriage should be perfectly free between persons who were not expressly forbidden by the Divine law from entering into marriage. When we come to ask what is the Divine Law, and to what extent for Scotch purposes it is taken as part of the Scotch Law, we are referred to the well-known 18th chapter of Leviticus; but here again we find eminent authorities declaring their opinion that there is no sort of prohibition of these marriages in the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses of that chapter. I should be bold, indeed, to argue this question without the strong support of authorities. First, I quote the opinion of the Lord Advocate Rutherford; he, in 1848, in reference to the inquiry into the working of Lord Lyndhurst's Act of 1835, said—

> "The legality of the marriage would depend, I think, if it were tried, on the question whether the 18th chapter of Leviticus does or

does not prohibit marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife. Generally speaking, writers and text-books consider such marriages illegal."

But then he goes on—

> "It has been the opinion of very eminent lawyers that such marriages should be held good in law, and the issue of such marriages legitimate, and though I have some doubts, out of respect for those who take the opposite view, I am myself inclined to the same opinion."

A great authority on the law of husband and wife was Lord Fraser, who died only a few days ago. He tells us, that as to the Confession of Faith, which was ratified by Act of Parliament, it has not the binding effect of law, and he adopts the view of Lord Rutherford, and he was inclined to think that such a marriage would be lawful. In his opinion, if a case were to arise in Scotland at the present time (1848), the Scotch Courts would have to consider what was the meaning of the verses in the 18th chapter of Leviticus, and he declared his opinion that the 18th verse of that chapter has, in fact, nothing to do with marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Now, I think, the opinions of these authorities, Lord Rutherford and Lord Fraser at all events, sustain my position, that the law of Scotland is, at least, doubtful on this subject. And now I wish to leave the special Scotch aspect of the question and treat it a little more generally. Now, the Statute of 1835, on which the law in England and Ireland rests, in its preamble explains how the previous law stood, and it is really very important, at any rate very interesting, that Members should understand how the law stood until 1835. The law was this—a man might marry his deceased wife's sister, and men did so again and again, and the marriage was perfectly good in law for all purposes, and the children born were legitimate, unless during the lifetime of both parents a suit was instituted to void the marriage by proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Court. Such a marriage might be voided or not voided. Lord Lyndhurst's Bill was, no doubt, brought in to legitimatize a particular marriage of a particular individual who had contracted a marriage with his deceased wife's sister. The Bill was brought forward for private reasons, but, of course, it would have been a scandalous abuse of legislation to deal with one case and leave all other similar cases untouched, and, therefore, the consequence of that Bill was to legalize, as the Act did legalize, all marriages of the kind contracted before that date. All persons who, up to then, had married their deceased wife's sister, had their marriages made absolutely valid, and their children were made legitimate. This was the great object of the Bill, but when it got into the House of Lords, that House, influenced, I believe, by the Lords Spiritual, not contented with that operation of the Bill, put in an additional Clause, which made absolutely null and void for the future, marriages which, as regards the past, it was the main object of the Bill to legitimatize. In 1848, only a few years afterwards, it was considered necessary to inquire into the working of the Act of 1848, and a strong Commission was appointed for the purpose. Its members included the then Bishop of Lichfield, and the Commission was strong in point of legal ability. Having taken evidence of a comprehensive character, including Catholics and Protestants of all denominations, this Commission reported unanimously—including the Bishop—in a sense directly contrary to the satisfactory working of the Act of 1835, and their Report should be borne in mind in relation to this proposed legislation. The Commissioners reported that the Statute of 1835 had failed to attain its object, that it had not prevented marriages with a deceased wife's sister, and expressed great doubt whether a measure of this prohibitive character could be efficacious or was justified. This was the conclusion arrived at by the Commissioners—including the Bishop. I make a point of mentioning the Bishop, with special reference to the fact that the unchanged state of the law is due to the particular view of the Lords Spiritual in another place. In 1848 a Bill was introduced to legalize these marriages, and since then similar Bills have been passed by this House again and again. It has been represented again and again that the state of the law is doing gross injustice to a number of decent, respectable persons whose children are bastardized in spite of the strong evidence there is as to the desirability of making this change in the law. Well, 1848 is a long time ago, and it is worthy of consideration whether opinion has since then been growing in the direction wished for by the promoters of this Bill. I should like for a moment to glance round at opinions among persons of various ways of thinking. Roman Catholics are a large body in the country, and among them, both here and abroad, the marriages can be and are frequently contracted. The Commission went into this matter, and the effect of their Report is that the Roman Catholic Church, as a matter of discipline, forbids these marriages, not absolutely forbidding them, and holds that such are permitted by the Word of God. They are restrained by the rules of the Church; but it is possible to suspend the rule, and in certain cases they may be and are contracted by means of a Dispensation granted by the Pope, or by some other authority under him. As a matter of fact, in Roman Catholic countries such marriages do take place with the permission of the Church, and is an every-day experience in those countries. I am told, and I have no doubt it is the case, that 220 priests in the Metropolitan district have petitioned in favour of legislation of this kind. As representing an important body, it is important to know their views. In Scotland I know there used to be a very strong feeling in the Presbyterian Church against these marriages; but I maintain that opinion is giving way before further inquiry, careful examination of texts, the issue of the Revised Version of the Scriptures, and the growth of wisdom on the subject. The Established Church of Scotland used every year to pass a resolution against proposals of this kind; but they have for the last few years given up that form of opposition, and I am told that the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr is favourable to this proposal. There is not—if I may use the expression without offence—a more "straight-laced" body in Scotland than the United Presbyterian Church; but I find that a great majority of the Presbyteries of that Church are favourable to the legalization of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. I am told that the Free Church is against the proposal; but I know that Dr. Chalmers himself was strongly in favour of it. I may be told that Professor Rainy, a great leader of the Free Church, is in determined hostility to the Bill, and I know he is, but I can cite him as a witness in our favour, for he says that supporters of the proposal are on the whole increasing among Members of the Free Church, and include many for whom he has the most sincere respect. There is evidence then at all events that the state of feeling is divided on the point, and that there is a strong feeling in favour of the Bill among Roman Catholics, among members of the Established Church, among the United Presbyterians, and even Professor Rainy admits that many leading and most respected members of the Free Church are rapidly coming round in favour of the proposal I am now submitting to the House. In the Church of England the majority of the Bishops are, unfortunately, opposed to us, but I have referred to one distinguished exception, the Prelate who signed the Report to which I have referred, and I might refer to other dignitaries of the Church who have strongly advocated this proposal. The names of Dean Hook, and of the Dean of Westminster would be included in a long list of eminent men who have argued strongly in support of the legalization of such marriages. I do not wish to trouble the House with references to petitions for and against, but, considering the opposition of the hon. Member for the county of Inverness, I should like to point out that of the 21 Members of the Town Council of the Borough of Inverness 16 are in favour of this proposal. If that is the state of opinion in a district upon which most reliance is placed for opposition to the Bill, what is likely to be the division of opinion in other parts of the country? Seven times since 1848 have Bills of this kind passed all their stages in the House of Commons, and I have been informed that in more than 70 divisions the House has declared in favour of legalizing these marriages. Are we not at last to legislate in conformity with the wishes of the Representatives of the people? When is the time to come if not after 70 decisions given sometimes under a Conservative and sometimes under a Liberal Government? The House of Lords is against the proposal, but may we not hope that opinion is changing there as elsewhere?

On one or two occasions, in spite of the influence of the Lords Spiritual, decisions have been given in that House in favour of the Bill, though never with such a decisive result as to carry the Bill into law. It is time now to deal with it. Decided opinions have been expressed in different places in this country, and I will only make one reference to opinion abroad, and that in the United States. In America Mr. Storey, the eminent jurist, expressed his opinion, on being asked by the Commission in 1848, whether there was any feeling among decent respectable people as to the impropriety of such marriages in America, said there was no feeling of the kind, it was rather regarded as a praise-worthy thing, and a simple and proper arrangement. Are we not, I would ask, taking too much upon ourselves when we legislate to prevent the contracting of marriages which are in consonance with the moral and religious sense of large numbers of the people, which have the support of eminent members of various churches, and to which in America and in our Colonies no sort of objection is raised? We have to look on the application of the legislation to the poor as well as to the rich, and I must say that to the poor the application of the law appears to me most harsh, unjust, and cruel when it treats as bastards the children of such marriages. An Australian may contract such a marriage, and his children, legitimate in Australia, may come here, and what will be their position? For what reason do you maintain the old state of the law here? I do not wish to trespass at any greater length on the time of the House, but I would impress upon hon. Members that this question is not to be decided by reference to any antiquated law. I do not lay great stress on the interpretation of the chapter in Leviticus, though I maintain that is in our favour; but, setting that aside, we have to consider the morality of the present day and legislate for ourselves. Is such a limitation necessary, when we see among decent, respectable people of all denominations no objection whatever to such marriages, either on religious or social grounds? I think I have shown strong ground to induce the House to change the law and bring it into conformity with what is becoming the general opinion among decent people. There are some arguments I have not gone into, but I think the main arguments against my position are what is called the Divine Law, and what is called interference with domestic comfort and social relations. But I have never been able any more than were the Commissioners in 1848 to see the strength of this argument for rich or poor. The words of the Report of the Commissioners should be borne in mind by every Member who proposes to vote on this question. The Commissioners dealt with the subject as it affected the poorer classes; they pointed out—

> "How when a poor man had the misfortune to lose his wife some assistance for the management and care of his children becomes indispensable, and if he cannot afford to pay for such assistance, which must be rendered immediately, all circumstances point to the sister of the deceased wife as the natural assistant, and cohabitation becomes almost inevitable, with or without the form of marriage."

Do you not then undertake a very great responsibility when you prevent by law marriage contracts under such circumstances? Are you content with a state of the law that renders such a marriage illegal? If you render it illegal you place the parties in a very doubtful position, and it is a point to consider whether we have a right to force such a position. It is a subject to be considered in a wise and liberal spirit, and in that spirit I commend this Bill to the House. Similar proposals have received the support of majorities, Liberal and Conservative. If it is once more to be rejected, let it be known that the rejection is not by the will of the Representatives of the people, not because the proposal is not deemed right and just by the country, but solely because of a special view taken for some year past, and which, I am afraid, is still taken by a section of Members, forming one Estate of the Realm, in another place.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. C. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire): My hon. Friend has made a long statement, but said very little in support of the Bill now before the House. The whole of his speech, in fact, would have been more appropriate to a Bill dealing with the United Kingdom, and not to Scotland only. I would have been content to give a silent vote, were it not that for the first time a Bill has been brought in on this subject applicable to Scotland alone, and as my hon. Friend has thrown down the gauntlet, I feel bound to take it up. He has said very little on the immediate subject; but when he wishes to make a change in the Marriage Laws, which have existed in Scotland for 300 years, he is bound to show there is a strong feeling in favour of the alteration. He has shown the existence of no such feeling, by petition or otherwise. I believe if it were known generally throughout Scotland that a Bill of this character had the least likelihood of passing, petitions against it would pour in from all parts of Scotland. In making this reference to petitions, let me add that any one who knows Scotland must be quite aware that the voice of the Free Church is entitled to the highest consideration in a question like the present, and its Committee has petitioned against the Bill. Nay, more, a petition I had the honour of presenting to-day is of a most representative character, and if I read the names of the 70 gentlemen who signed it, I am sure anyone who knows Scotland would acknowledge it was as fair a representation of the best feeling of Scotland as you could find. Seven Bishops of the Episcopal Church, many members of the Established Church, many members of the Free Church, and of the United Presbyterians, have signed this important petition. I will not go into the large question as to whether the prohibition is wise or not, I leave that to those who follow me. I will deal only with the Bill before us. The preamble states that there is serious doubt as to the law of Scotland; but I maintain there is no doubt at all. If there were any doubt there would be no reason for this Bill. The laws of Scotland in regard to marriage are quite different to those in England. In Roman Catholic times, as every student of Scottish history knows, the restrictions imposed by the Church in Scotland were so severe that parties removed even beyond four degrees of consanguinity were not allowed to marry without a dispensation from the head of the Roman Church, and in consequence of the little connection with England and the isolation of districts, it has been stated by well-known historians, that at the time of the Reformation, according to the restrictions of the Roman Church, half the population of Scotland were illegitimate, because their parents were not rich enough to get a dispensation from Rome. After the Reformation the law as to marriage proceeded in an opposite direction, allowing much freedom and liberty. The Act of 1567 being based almost entirely on the Scriptural view of the subject, it does not lay down who are to marry and who are not, but it gives permission, according to the law of Scripture, and this has been the state of the law for three centuries. The Confession of Faith embodied into the Law of Scotland definitely prohibited these marriages, and notwithstanding what was said by the hon. Member for Roxburgh, there is no doubt whatever that almost all theologians who have written on the subject support the view there plainly stated, that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is illegal. And now let me examine further this Bill which the hon. Member is so anxious to get passed. The Bill declares all marriages with a deceased wife's sister valid, any law, or custom, or canonical law, or objection, or impediment to the contrary notwithstanding. Now this is a very wide phrase—any law or impediment to the contrary notwithstanding—and I would put this question to the framers of the Bill. Suppose a man, after the death of his first wife, has married another lady, whom I may call an outsider, yet wishes to marry his first wife's sister, then there is nothing to prevent him putting aside his second wife and carrying out his wish under this clause—any law or impediment notwithstanding. More than this, supposing that after the death of his first wife he wishes to marry her sister, who happens to be married to another man, I am not sure whether, under this clause, he would not still be enabled to accomplish his wish. Those who have looked into the state of the existing law are perfectly satisfied that the Bill would be quite unworkable. Many difficulties would arise under it and many complications would result.

Suppose father and son married two sisters, and suppose the father died and the son's wife died, would the son be entitled to marry his mother-in-law? Or, on the other hand, could the father, on the death of his wife and his son, marry his daughter-in-law. Further it would be quite possible for a man to marry his own niece. It is because of these inconsistencies, and because there is no favourable expression of opinion, that the Bill is required in Scotland, that I move the Bill be read a Second Time this day six months.

Motion made, and Amendment proposed, to leave out "now" and insert at end of Question "this day six months."

Mr. M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): In seconding the Amendment I will say but a few words on this measure. I am quite satisfied that its effect would be to sap the foundations of the happiness of pure and happy peaceful homes. It would be disastrous to the social well-being of the country, and this is the great objection many of us take to this Bill. From time immemorial, I might say for many hundreds of years, the present laws of affinity have been recognized, and upon these conditions marriages have been contracted, and the intervention of such an Act would have a disastrous social effect. This is not merely a rich man's question. I am well aware that in certain places there are people most anxious to have this Bill passed into law, for the reason that in the past they have chosen to break the law, and now wish to get rid of the consequences by another Act of Parliament. But we have to consider not the effect upon a few individuals, whether they be rich or poor, but the effect upon the nation, and I repeat, any infringement of the present law of marriage will work most disastrously to the State. That the sister is the proper guardian of her deceased sister's children I agree; but pass this Bill and her position in the husband's house becomes an invidious one, and a husband must hesitate before he allows her to enter his house and undertake those natural duties of guardian to his children. Such a very serious change in the Marriage law cannot be considered in a short afternoon's discussion. The example of America has been cited; but I think anybody who has travelled in the United States, must have noticed that the status of marriage is more lightly treated there than among ourselves. If we judge by the transactions in the American Law Courts we find that in one State the proportions of divorces and marriages is 11 and 12 per cent, in another 12 and 14 per cent, and in another 8 per cent, and a change in the law as now proposed will lead to this further imitation of the American precedent, and the proceedings in the Divorce Court will come to be regarded in a very different light to that they are now. I am not here to argue in favour of the 18th Chapter of Leviticus, but there are two opinions in regard to it; but this I will say, that throughout the length and breadth of the Scriptures you find this principle laid down and recognized, that man and wife are one flesh, and it follows that the ties of kinship must be recognized. Once break through this principle, and you injure the sanctity of the marriage laws in the sight of the large majority of the people of this country. I do not find there is any anxiety among the people to have this alteration made. I know more about the feeling in the country than in the towns; and certainly, in the agricultural districts, I have never heard any wish expressed for the change, and no feeling expressed but that of scorn, or perhaps pity, for those who have broken this law. It cannot, I believe, be shown that there is any real desire for this Bill in Scotland. The hon. Member for Roxburgh points to opinions held by certain members of the Free Church; and I daresay many of them may be found desirous of the change, if for nothing else, because they think this is one of the many ways in which the influence of the Established Church may be undermined. I know it to be the fact that many gentlemen holding views inimical to the Established Church are very anxious that this Bill should pass into law; but this cannot be advanced to show that there is any general feeling among the community. As Lord Cairns once said, this restriction comes down to us from the earliest date, and, if you extend or abolish it, you lead us into difficulties and perplexities of which it is impossible to see the end. The hon. Member for Inverness has pointed out the absurdity of the position under which a man might marry his step-mother, and it is not so uncommon a thing for a father and son to marry sisters. I do not think that it is wise to alter the law to allow of such a position. That the marriage laws of Scotland require reform I allow, but not such a reform as this. It is said this is a working man's question; but I deny that there is any feeling among that class in favour of this Bill. The help for his children a widower of the working class receives now from his sister-in-law would be less freely given under this Bill, and he will hesitate to avail himself of her help in his household. The example of Canada and other Colonies is cited, but I do not accept the doctrine that because those Colonies do what we consider wrong, that, therefore, we should do wrong with them. The people of Scotland have always been opposed to this proposal, and I believe that feeling continues as strong as ever. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland must carry great weight, for it is a body whereon every parish in Scotland is represented; and more or less it must embody the opinion of every parish, and the General Assembly is strongly opposed to this change. The Bishops and Clergy of the Episcopal Church have repeatedly passed resolutions condemning the proposal. If we go to legal opinion, I ask hon. Gentlemen to note the opinions of Lord Chancellors, who may be taken as the brightest luminaries of English law on the subject. Take the speeches of Lord Hatherley, Lord St. Leonards, Lord Cairns, Lord Selborne, and I believe I can include the present Lord Chancellor, and you will find they express opinions distinctly opposed to this Bill. I know that one Lord Chancellor, Lord Westbury, was of a contrary opinion; but, with all respect, I do not think he was a great Ecclesiastical lawyer, and I know Lord Bramwell supports the principle of this Bill. But the strength of legal opinion is in favour of keeping the law as it is. Certainly no strong reasons have to-day been urged in favour of an alteration. Until such reasons are laid down forcibly and clearly with the concurrence of Scottish opinion, I shall oppose this Bill. The movement in favour of the Bill, such as it is, emanates from paid officials in the office for the promotion of this measure; it is not an agitation arising spontaneously in the country. These gentlemen take upon themselves to instruct and mislead Members of Parliament, who in turn endeavour to mislead the country; but the consensus of public opinion is utterly opposed to the proposal.

MR. S. WILLIAMSON (Kilmarnock): I hope the House will permit the Second Reading of this Bill. The hon. Member who has just sat down has urged objections which will not, I think, carry much weight. He says the movement in favour of the Bill arises very much out of feelings of opposition to the Established Church, but I have only to point to the paper which has been circulated among hon. Members to-day, and the signatures to the petitions presented, to indicate that the Bill has the support of members of the Established Church alike with those of of the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches. The Established Church has no place at all in this controversy, and I am extremely sorry the hon. Member introduced the allusion. The hon. Member for Kirkcudbright says the effect of the Bill will be to prevent the deceased wife's sister from undertaking the duties of guardian of her sister's children, for which she is specially fitted. We may put aside the question as regards persons among the wealthier classes and the social arrangements there, but consider the position of a poor man, left without a wife, and with three or four or more young children. He may live in one or two rooms, and the result of the sister coming to live with him has been touched upon by my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh in his references to the Report of the Commission of 1848. The inevitable result under the present system is to increase illegitimacy. We would do away with this scandal. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister, we are told, is opposed to the teaching of Scripture. For myself, I believe in the teaching of Scripture, and have tried to inform myself on this point, but I can find no teaching in Scripture opposed to the principle of this Bill. That man and wife are one flesh is quite true in a certain figurative sense, but man and wife can only be one flesh so long as they are alive together on earth. Scripture raises no obstacle and sets up no hindrance when the wife has left this world; man and wife are then no longer one flesh. But this is so well understood, I think, that it would be wasting time to detain the House any longer. With reference to the illustration brought forward by the hon. Member for Inverness, it should be remembered that, whatever there is offensive in the idea is permitted at the present time when father and son can marry sisters. In the interests of sanctity, I support the Second Reading of the Bill.

*Sir CHAS. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): To the principle upon which the Bill is founded I must offer every possible opposition. I am sorry the hon. Member who has just sat down missed altogether the point of the remarks of the hon. Member for Inverness, for although I do not think this is a subject for joking, the hon. Member did succeed in reducing the principle of the Bill to something like an absurdity. The words of the Bill which led to the remarks of the hon. Member are "any law, custom, canonical, or other obstacle or impediment to the contrary notwithstanding," so that it would seem the promoters of the Bill would annul a marriage of the deceased wife's sister with another man should her brother-in-law desire the union. It strikes me as especially offensive that this Bill should be applied to Scotland only. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Roxburghshire says it is the fortune of the ballot that brought his Bill to the top, but there is another Bill lower down on the orders of the day applicable to the United Kingdom; and I assume the Bills are alike in their object. I cannot but surmise the object is to pass this Bill for Scotland in order that the fact may supply an argument in favour of the second Bill. The hon. Member told us of the great interest this Bill excites in Scotland, but I could not but think that the statement was somewhat qualified by the fact that while he was speaking there were only nine Scotch representatives behind him, and generally when a Scotch question is under discussion, Scotch Members are not remiss in their attendance. The hon. Member alluded to the growth of public opinion in favour of the principle of the Bill. I am not sure that I agree with him in regard to the opinion among religious denominations, but I noticed that he passed very lightly over the opinion of the United Presbyterian and Free Churches. The hon. Gentleman who just sat down derided the signatures attached to the paper which I hold in my hand.

Mr. S. WILLIAMSON: I did not deride the signatures.

*Sir C. DALRYMPLE: Amongst the signatories a notable number belong to the Free Church, and men having very great weight amongst Free Churchmen are represented in the list. And then, if we go into the question of denominations, we find that all the Bishops belonging to the Episcopal Church of Scotland have signed it. The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the Roman Catholics, and no doubt they are a very important body, but it is to be remembered that in that Church a Papal dispensation has to be obtained, and such dispensations are sometimes given in rather curious cases, as, for instance, in the recent disgusting marriage of the Duke of Aosta with his niece. The hon. Member for Roxburghshire said that on 70 different occasions there have been majorities in favour of this Bill, but surely he is under a misapprehension—surely he means not that there have been majorities on 70 occasions, but that there have been 70 divisions on this Bill. The cases of those who have broken the law are brought up, and it is sought to give them relief by this measure, but I do not sympathize with the endeavour, holding that those who have broken the law must take the consequences of their act. And then, as to the poor man argument, it must be remembered that it cuts two ways. It is said that a poor man whose wife has died will be glad to marry his sister-in-law to take care of his children; but suppose he does not want to marry his sister-in-law? If she is a possible wife, it will be improper, according to the ordinary rules of morality and custom for her to remain resident in his house. The sister-in-law no doubt is a natural guardian of a deceased sister's children, but if this Bill passed she could not be that unless there was a marriage, for if she were a marriageable woman and went to live in her brother-in-law's house without marriage the state of things would be highly improper. But as a matter of fact there is nothing new to be said on this subject, on which I have never spoken before. But as I am a Scotchman, and was formerly a Scotch Member for 17 years, I could not remain silent on this occasion.

*Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow College): The hon. Member for Inverness-shire found some fault with the drafting of the Bill. Well, I am willing to concede that my hon. and learned Friend would have succeeded better if he had brought forward a simple measure repealing the 18th chapter of Leviticus and inserting whatever re-enactments were to be hereafter enforced. But that would have been even less agreeable to the opponents of this Bill. The hon. Member for Inverness drew for us a picture of absurdities. The case he gave of a father and son marrying sisters, and one spouse in each case dying, is not applicable, because such a marriage would be between uncle and niece, or nephew and aunt by marriage, which is forbidden. The fact is. there is not a single argument to be brought against marriage with a deceased wife's sister from a social point of view which is not equally valid against any second marriage whatever. The hon. Baronet opposite talked about the position in which a deceased wife's sister would be placed if she came into a brother-in-law's house and took charge of his children; but did the hon. Gentleman never hear of a gentleman being obliged to introduce a housekeeper into his house to look after his children, or a governess to educate them; and I trust the world is not yet so calumnious and censorious that it will refuse to respect the position of a marriageable woman who undertakes the care of children under such circumstances. The hon. Member for Kirkcudbright drew a terrible picture of what might occur if men were to be allowed to marry their deceased wife's sister. He said that divorces would become more frequent; and if that is the sort of argument which is brought against the Bill I would ask the House to consider to what desperate straits its opponents must be reduced. We are asked "Who seeks this Bill; who demands it?" My reply is, "My constituents have demanded it—a poor working class constituency. When a wife dies in one of their households amongst working men, the widower is compelled to choose from three or four people who is to take charge of his children. He would either choose his mother, his deceased wife's mother, his sister, or his sister-in-law, being unable to obtain a housekeeper from outside the family circle. Very often it is the deceased wife's sister he chooses it results that it would have been much better if a marriage had been allowed between them. It is greatly to the credit of human nature that, under present circumstances, many good sisters-in-law do come into the houses of their deceased sister's husband to look after his children. The fact that they are not eligible for marriage does not, in many cases, protect them against calumny, but they are willing to allow sneers to be levelled at them, and if they are able to resist sneers now they would be able to resist them if this Bill became law. One point which has not yet been referred to is the bearing of this subject upon Scottish Criminal Law. The last exposition we had on this point occurred in the year 1705. In that year a marriage of this kind was contracted in Scotland, and the parties were prosecuted for incest. The woman, unfortunately, pleaded guilty and was hanged. The man pleaded not guilty, and, as the jury refused to convict, he was simply expelled 'furth' the country. That was hardly a satisfactory solution of the law, and I can quite understand that men who happen to have married their deceased wife's sister forbear giving to the Court of Session to test the matter by way of an action of Declarator lest being made of one flesh by the Court of Session they should find themselves divorced by the noose of the hangman. I do not know what the law as to capital punishment for this offence now is, but I presume it remains at all events in an obsolete form, as it was in 1705. I advocate this Bill, not from a theoretical point of view, but because I consider it a reform urgently demanded by a large number of working-men in the constituency I have the honour to represent in the city of Glasgow—in which city there are 60,000 constituents, a large proportion of them being working-men. I pronounced emphatically for this proposal when I entered Parliament 15 years ago, and never on one occasion have my constituents found fault with me for the position I have assumed. But as time is short I will not go further into the matter, and will merely express a hope that speeches will not be made by English Members opposite merely for the sake of talking the Bill out.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I see no reason why only one kind of affinity as a bar to marriage should be chosen for attack and other kinds not interfered with. I cannot understand why affinity should be altogether disregarded. If a man may marry his sister-in-law, why should not a woman marry her deceased husband's brother? I am familiar with a country in which a woman is not only allowed but compelled to marry her deceased husband's brother. That is the law both of the Aryan and the Semitic races. I am in favour of the principle underlying this measure, but I view the Bill with no favour, for I regard it as the result of a mere agitation got up by a certain society. As the Bill does not deal with the whole question, I would rather walk out of the House than record my vote one way or the other.

*COLONEL MAKINS (Essex, S.E.): I have constantly opposed all Bills of this kind, and I always shall. I rise to speak on this measure, though its scope is confined to Scotland, because I believe that this Scotch Bill is a mere stalking-horse for the more general Bill which stands a little lower down on the Order Paper. The argument used by almost everyone who has hitherto spoken in favour of the Bill is that public opinion is in favour of it, and that public opinion is growing in favour of it. Well, I am not at all sure that the time will not come when there may be a majority of people in favour of it; but that time has not yet come. If it be a question so very near the hearts of the constituencies in general, why is it not made a test question at an election? Has any Government even taken the question up, or even given facilities for pushing it forward? If the question were one in which any great part of the people felt an earnest interest, no Government would be able to resist the pressure, but would have to take the matter up and legislate on it. But even if the time comes when there is a majority in favour of this change in the law, I contend that, if anything is done at all, the whole question of the Marriage Laws ought to be dealt with generally. It might be desirable to allow such marriages to be entered into civilly; but I object to any interference with the attitude adopted with regard to them by religious bodies. To legalize such interference would offend the religious feelings of a large number of the people of this country. No doubt it would be desirable to simplify, as far as possible, the Marriage Law, especially in Scotland, where it is in the greatest muddle; but I contend that this measure would not simplify the matter, but would only render it more complicated. It would introduce absurdities even greater than those which now exist. Besides, it contains the old vice which has characterized every Bill of this kind—the vice of being retrospective—[*Cries of* "Divide!"]—those who have taken the law into their own hands are to be whitewashed, and their illegality is to be rendered legal by means of this Bill. Of course, in the matter of religious legality the Bill could not operate, as it would not alter the view of anyone, and I am sure that to deal with the subject in this piecemeal fashion, offending the vast majority of the religious people of this country, would be a fatal mistake. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] I can quite understand the impatience of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but I can assure them it is not my intention to endeavour to talk the Bill out. I have always felt very strangely on the matter, and have often raised my voice against the object of the Bill, and whenever a measure of this kind is under discussion I shall feel bound in my conscience to offer every possible resistance to it. I hope the Bill will not be read a second time.

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I rise in response to the challenge of the hon. and learned Member for Roxburghshire to say a few words as to the present state of the Scotch law as to these marriages. The hon. and learned Member said the object of the Bill is to harmonize the Statute Law with what is already the Common Law of Scotland, and the Preamble of the Bill asserts that the law of Scotland is in serious doubt on this point. But who has any doubt? Will any Scotch lawyer get up and assert that the law of Scotland is not perfectly clear and distinctly opposed to these marriages? The hon. and learned Member has relied on some fugitive opinion of Lord Fraser, but in a treatise published by that learned Judge within the last few years such marriages are distinctly stated to be contrary to the Scotch Law. It is not true that the Scotch Law is based on a chapter in Leviticus. By two Statutes of the Scottish Parliament passed, one before and another at the time of the Revolution Settlement, the Confession of Faith was made part of the Statute Law of Scotland, the Confession of Faith contains as one of its Articles that "A man shall not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer than any of his own," and that Article is in accordance with the conscience and practice of the Scotch people for generations.

Dr. CAMERON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 203; Noes 131.—(Div. List, No. 61.)

Question put accordingly, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The House divided:—Ayes 184; Noes 131.—(Div. List, No. 62.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday, 26th June.

PRIVATE BILL COMMISSIONERS BILL.—[No. 153.] QUESTION.

Mr. CRAIG SELLAR (Lanarkshire, Partick): I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will, after Easter, give facilities for the discussion of this Bill, which is the outcome of the deliberations of a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament?

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle): I can confirm what the hon. Member has said, as to the Bill being the outcome of the deliberations of a Select Committee.

Sir J. MOWBRAY (Oxford University): Perhaps the First Lord of the Treasury could arrange for the matter to be discussed some Tuesday in May.

Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): I would point out that there was only a small majority of the Committee in favour of the principle of the Bill.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am aware of the importance of the subject, and should be glad if the Bill could be discussed, but I am afraid that I cannot enter into any engagement in the matter. I hope, however, that an opportunity will be found for proposing the Second Reading in the course of the Session.

TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT (1847) AMENDMENT BILL.—[Bill 65.]

Read the third time, and passed.

It being Six of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 14.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 12.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 4*th April*, 1889.

TOWN POLICE CLAUSES ACT (1847) AMENDMENT BILL. (NO. 38.)

Read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Tuesday next (The Earl of Milltown).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Moved, "That the first and third paragraphs of Standing Order No. XXI. be suspended, and that the Motion for the appointment of a Chairman of Committees have precedence of the Orders of the Day and Notices which stand before it;"—(*The Marquess of Salisbury*).

Agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY), in rising to move—

> "That the Lord Balfour of Burley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session; that the Lord Balfour of Burley do take the Chair in all Committees of the whole House unless it shall have been otherwise directed by the House; that the Lord Balfour of Burley do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House,"

said: My Lords, when I made, in this House, a similar Motion, four years ago, I little thought it would ever be my lot to repeat it. It is an invidious motion to make, because it involves a question of preference, and it exposes the man who makes it to the imputation of not being sufficiently alive to the merits of those whom he may sincerely respect, but who are not the objects of his Motion. It is a Motion on which I certainly shall not propose to detain your Lordships long. The very nature of it—the very fact that we are arguing a personal question in the presence of the persons to whom we refer—makes it impossible that our arguments should be long, or that we should dwell upon them with great emphasis. On the other hand, though we are not able to go at any length into these questions, we have the happiness of knowing that the noble Lords whose qualifications are under consideration are well known to all Members of the House, and that they are as capable of forming a judgment as we are who make a Motion on the subject and recommend a judgment to the House. With regard to another noble Lord whose name I see the noble Earl opposite has put upon the Paper, I will only express in passing the very great respect which not only I, but I am sure all the Members of the House, feel for him both in his individual and his public capacity. And I wish carefully to guard myself from being supposed to utter a word which is disrespectful to him in the language which I am going to employ. On the contrary, I prefer to pass by the question of the alternative altogether, and in the very few remarks which I have to make confine myself to pointing out the reasons which appear to me to make it desirable to elect Lord Balfour of Burley to be the successor of the Duke of Buckingham, whom we so much lament. My Lords, Lord Balfour is well known to you as a noble Lord who has taken the deepest interest in the Private Business of this House, who is well acquainted with the Standing Orders and the Business of the House, who has taken a leading part in all discussions which concern the interior management and conduct of this House.

He is a man also well known to you for great capacity and singular industry; a man of business, a man who has acquired in other fields among his own countrymen great influence and great estimation, and who has received much public employment. I will not enumerate the various occasions on which he has had public employment, but I will merely recall to the minds of your Lordships one duty which he had to perform, which was a duty of a critical and difficult character, and which brought out very forcibly a capacity for dealing with business, which is one of his great qualifications—I refer to his conduct of the Local Government Bill through this House last year. It was a Bill full of detail, full of questions of business, a Bill as to which there was much danger that it might be wrecked or seriously injured in this House, where many different opinions might prevail on matters with which your Lordships were exceptionally familiar; but he conducted it through with that grasp of subject and that perfect knowledge of detail which met every questioner and answered every objection, and he succeeded in uniting your Lordships without difficulty in maintaining the main principle of the Bill. My noble Friend occupies a position in Her Majesty's Government. I only refer to that in order to meet by anticipation a criticism which I remember the noble Earl opposite addressed to me with reference to the noble Duke who was the last holder of the office. He said to me, "Why, if you admire his business capacity, have you not included him in your Government?" Whatever justice or injustice there was in that argument on that occasion, it is an argument which is inapplicable now. My Lords, there is only one other consideration which makes me think at the present time that Lord Balfour of Burley would be a singularly fit occupant of this Chair. Our system of private business has many anomalies and defects, and I think that those anomalies and defects are somewhat exaggerated in some quarters; but the only part of the country where it meets with real hostility, and from which a demand for a change comes with great vehemence, is Scotland. I feel that in the discussions which lie before us in respect to private business, and in the conduct of any efforts that we may make for improving its procedure, and for meeting the complaints from Scotland to which I have referred, it will be a great advantage to have as the representative of the conduct of private business in this House the man through whose hands some of the most important portions of it passed a noble Lord who has established a great influence in Scotland, and who is thoroughly trusted by the men of business in that country. I feel that that would be a circumstance of great advantage, and at the present time a Scotchman, if we may make any preference among the three Kingdoms, is the fittest occupant of that Chair. My Lords, I will only venture to remind you in conclusion that there is one special quality which we require in dealing with our Chairman of Committees, and that quality is stiffness and firmness. He has to deal with a body of men who principally are remarkable for the variety and multiplicity of their ingenious modes of carrying their objects into effect. They are men whose appeals would melt any heart ordinarily soft, and whose sophistry would confuse any brain that was not exceptionally clear. They are some of the cleverest men which the country can produce, and they are men who will put into operation every means they can employ in order to carry out the duty which they have undertaken to their clients. In dealing with such men, I ventured to submit to your Lordships when the Duke of Buckingham was appointed that a stern and stiff character was an essential qualification of the noble Lord who has to occupy that Chair. In addition to these things he must have a great knowledge of business, he must be a man in whom men repose confidence in the transaction of business; and for all these reasons I move that the name of Lord Balfour of Burley be the one selected to follow that of my lamented Friend the Duke of Buckingham.

EARL GRANVILLE: My Lords, I quite agree with the preface of the noble Marquess's speech, and I should have preferred if the Leader of the House had proposed a Peer for the Chairmanship of your Lordships' Committees who would have been unanimously considered not only as a good candidate, but as the best. But, as on the last occasion, this has not been found possible. The choice is all the more important for the House itself and for the public, because, although you appoint the Chairman at the beginning of every Session, yet, from the custom which obtains, the first appointment is hardly more provisional than the selection of a wife in private life. You take him for better or worse. I wish it to be clearly understood that I raise no objection to Lord Balfour. He has of late years deservedly gained the respect of your Lordships, and, although I must bring in a few words in comparison between the two, as it is our duty to compare their claims, yet nothing will fall from me offensive to the noble Lord. With regard to his nationality, I confess I thought the argument on that point was a little more ingenious than conclusive, and it is one that I am not sure will not be appreciated by the Irish Peers whom I see opposite. The only question is whether this would be the best possible appointment? When, three years ago, I proposed Lord Morley, I dwelt upon the complete fulfilment in this House of the promise which his great distinction at Oxford had given. I appealed to the way in which he took part in our debates, the authority with which he conducted the business of the important offices which he had represented here, and the power which he undoubtedly possesses of getting hold of the favourable attention of the House. I mentioned the high reputation he had obtained, during six years in the Home Office and five years in the War Office, for ability, judgment, and tact, for celerity combined with accuracy. The noble Marquess, three years ago, laid great stress upon the Duke of Buckingham's experience in important offices of the State, and upon his having had the training of a Chairman of Quarter Sessions. He laid it down as a necessity of the position of our Chairman that sufficient authority should be attached to the decisions which he gives. He should, he said, be a person of that age, experience, and past services which imposed his judgment upon others. Well, Lord Morley was for many years a Chairman of Quarter Sessions; he is now Deputy Chairman of the County Council. He is older than Lord Balfour; he has been twice as long in this House, and in constant attention to its private business. He has been successfully performing official work for more years than Lord Balfour has done for months. In stating his peculiar qualifications I am not merely giving my own opinion; they were recognized three years ago by Peers from each of the political sections of the House. I trust that the same evidence of opinion will be forthcoming this evening, more especially after the distinct assurance which has been given by the noble Marquess, and on which I entirely place my confidence, that he wishes to exercise no Party influence on this occasion. My Lords, I move, as an Amendment, that Lord Morley's name be substituted for that of Lord Balfour.

Amendment moved, to leave out "Lord Balfour of Burley" and insert "Earl of Morley."—(*The Earl Granville.*)

The Duke of ABERCORN: I rise to second the proposition of the noble Earl opposite. I hope in doing so that I am not taking any unusual course, and that your Lordships will not think for one instant that I am in any way wavering in my political allegiance to the noble Marquess. On the contrary, I may say that that allegiance increases every day. Neither can it be said that I am under the seductive influence of the noble Earl opposite—that seductive influence which it is well known he exercises upon several noble Lords in this House and many other persons outside the House. The noble Marquess has distinctly stated that this is not a political matter, and that the House, in making its selection, is to be guided by its own opinion. Therefore I trust that the noble Lord (Lord Balfour) who has been proposed by the noble Marquess will not think that, in seconding the proposition of the noble Earl, I, in any way, intend to show disrespect to him. On the contrary, no one in this House admires more than I do the great ability which has distinguished that noble Lord during the time he has had the honour of a seat in this House. But, to speak plainly and straightforwardly to your Lordships, I think that Lord Morley has the first claim. It may be within your Lordships' recollection that about three years ago the noble Marquess stated that the noble Lord to be selected as Chairman of Committees should be one who had the greatest experience of private and public Committees. For that reason the Duke of Buckingham was selected. To use an expression which may not be unfamiliar to your Lordships, Lord Morley was second favourite on that occasion. Now that the circumstances have altered, I venture to think that he might be considered first favourite. His Lordship has, during his 21 years of experience in this House, met with the approbation of your Lordships, both with regard to his studiousness and his ability, and the time during which he was free from the trammels of the Government he has devoted to the private Committees of this House. Upon them he has shown ability, quickness of perception, firmness, tact, and courtesy. The noble Marquess has spoken of firmness as one of the great attributes which ought to distinguish the Chair. That attribute distinguishes Lord Morley. I cannot, my Lords, sit down without expressing my sorrow—a sorrow which I am sure will be shared by all your Lordships—at the reason which has brought us here to-day in order to make a new selection of Chairman. The late Duke of Buckingham was only a few days ago among us and suddenly was taken from us. His loss will be felt by your Lordships, and especially by those with whom he was brought in contact in connection with the work of public and private Committees.

On question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Motion," their Lordships divided:—Contents 77; Not-Contents 95.

Resolved in the negative.

It was then moved to resolve, "That the Earl of Morley be appointed to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for the remainder of this Session; that the Earl of Morley do take the Chair in all Committees of the Whole House, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House; that the Earl of Morley do also take the Chair in all Committees upon Private Bills and other matters, unless where it shall have been otherwise directed by the House."

Motion agreed to; and resolved accordingly.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL
(No. 9.)

Amendment reported (according to order).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR moved to insert after Clause 42, page 26, a new clause as follows:—

42A.—(1.) Mechanical means of bodily restraint shall not be applied to any lunatic unless the restraint is necessary for purposes of surgical treatment, or to prevent the lunatic from injuring himself.

(2.) In every case where such restraint is applied, a medical certificate shall, as soon as it can be obtained, be signed, describing the mechanical means used, and stating the grounds upon which the certificate is founded.

(3.) The certificate shall be signed, in the case of a lunatic in an asylum or hospital, by the medical superintendent or a medical officer thereof, in the case of a lunatic in a licensed house, by the medical proprietor or medical attendant of the house, in the case of a lunatic in a workhouse, by the medical officer of the workhouse, and in the case of a single patient, by his medical attendant.

(4.) A full record of every case of restraint by mechanical means shall be kept from day to day; and a copy of the records and certificates under this section shall be sent to the Commissioners at the end of every quarter.

(5.) Any person who acts in contravention of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanour.

LORD HOBHOUSE moved to insert after the first sub-section the words "or in case of gross violation of decency or order."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR objected to the addition as inconsistent with the whole theory upon which this amendment of the law was desirable—namely, that the person directly responsible for the application of mechanical means of restraint should be the medical officer.

Further Amendment negatived.

LORD HOBHOUSE moved, after the words in Sub-section 5, "Any person who acts in contravention of this section," to insert the words "except under the reasonable belief that restraint is necessary."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR objected to this, but consented to the introduction of the word "wilfully" before the word "acts."

The new Clause, thus amended, was agreed to.

Further Amendments were made.

Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 35.)

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD THRING: My Lords, when I put a question in this House the other day to the Under Secretary of State for War (Lord Harris), my noble Friend administered to me a rebuke for intruding the matter of Army discipline upon the attention of the House before making myself thoroughly acquainted with the subject. Now, I may say that in the position I had the honour to hold during various Administrations under successive Ministers of War the subject of military discipline was continually under my consideration. I prepared the existing Code of Law and every document connected with that law. "The Manual of Military Law," which is the text book of the Army, was written under my superintendence, and several chapters by my own hand. Further, General Elles, now Adjutant General in India, then Colonel Elles, was deputed to assist me, and initiated me into every detail of military life and military discipline. I trust, therefore, your Lordships will pardon me if I take an interest in a subject which has been my study for many years. Now, with respect to the existing state of the law relating to military punishments, I wish to point out that the Order of 1887, which was brought forward and formulated by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, the true friend of the soldier, has removed a great many grievances of the soldier, and, as has been well said by a distinguished officer, it has effected a complete revolution in military discipline of a beneficent character. It diminished crime in the Army by 18 per cent immediately; it reduced the number of military prisoners in one year from 1,127 to 727. Has not the time come, I ask, when this beneficent system, which is now only a General Order, should be embodied in a Statute, and that the soldier should not be left to the caprice of a Court Martial? There is only one possible objection that I can conceive to embodying this reform in a Statute. We are often told that it is desirable to keep over the head of the soldier the possibility of an extreme punishment even for trivial offences by way of making an example in cases where general insubordination prevails; but what was the meaning of making an example? I have been behind the military curtain, and I say that, when a regiment becomes disorganized and gets out of discipline, it is either from the undue laxity or the unjust severity of its incompetent colonel, and the example which ought to be made in such a case is to discharge the colonel, and not to unduly punish the private soldier. I should not insist so much on this point if it were not that the Bill before the House seems to afford little hope that the Government intend to make further progress in this line of legislation. On the contrary, there is a clause in it which I hope has crept in without the sanction of the Under Secretary—a clause utterly and absolutely antagonistic to the whole spirit of the Order of 1887. The present Code discriminates between offences against military discipline and offences of an immoral, dishonest, and shameful character. Yet it is proposed to take men guilty of such merely military offences as breaking out of barracks and so forth, and degrade them among criminals and felons of the worst description. Then there is another point—the effect of the military law upon recruits. In 1883, 3,711 men deserted; of those 2,106 deserted during the first year of their service—that was two-thirds. In 1884 there were about three-fourths. In 1885 about two-fifths. These figures show that the severity of the military law operates against the successful recruiting for the Army. Another point is that it is almost impossible to exaggerate the ignorance of officers in the law which they have to administer. They are not taught that law. Instead of making the officer acquainted with the principles of the law he has to administer, the whole examination is taken up with questions which encourage him to learn by rote a few technical details utterly useless for practical purposes. It may be objected that the officers care nothing for the law; they say—"Confound the lawyers; the less we have of them the better;" and I agree with their condemnation of law as opposed to common sense, but I will undertake to say that any man who has seen any number of Courts Martial must be aware that of all technical tribunals in the world a Court Martial is the most addicted to technicalities, and officers entangle themselves in legal cobwebs, which would be swept away in a moment by a magistrate of any experience. Young officers, although men of great ability and willing to learn, have not the means of learning the principle of the law which they have to administer, and the examiners have not the skill to elicit such knowledge as they have. It has been stated that it is not the province of your Lordships' House to consider questions of discipline. Is it conceivable that if it is the duty of the House to pass a Bill of this description, which menaces with imprisonment, with penal servitude, and with death thousands and thousands of our countrymen, we ought not to look into this Act and scan every word of it? Is it conceivable that we are not to look to the administration of this most Draconian Code and to see wherever possible that justice is tempered with mercy?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord HARRIS): My Lords, I wish, at the outset, to observe that I thoroughly agree that it is not only perfectly justifiable, but eminently desirable, that a noble Lord who has had such wide experience in military law as has my noble Friend opposite should express his views upon a Bill of this character. The general tenour of the noble Lord's remarks, as I understand, is to justify the leniency which has crept into military punishments since 1887, and to ask the military authorities to consider whether, as time passes, it would not be possible and wise to extend that leniency still further. The noble Lord will quite understand that on a question of military discipline of this kind, and on such short notice, I am hardly able to give an answer offhand as to the extent to which the military authorities, from the experience they have gained in two years, would be justified in extending that more lenient system of dealing with military offences. The military authorities are satisfied with the experience they have gained up to the present time, and it is only reasonable to suppose that they will be prepared, if they find that that experience tends in the same direction in future, to meet the good behaviour on the part of the soldier by a proportionate relaxation of the bonds which surround him. The noble Lord asks whether it is not time that the advantages gained by the General Order of 1887 should be made law by an Act of Parliament. I do not see any advantage in that, because I am under the impression that all Courts Martial undergo very careful scrutiny both from the Judge Advocate General and also from the office of the Adjutant General. I think the soldier has ample security against an unfair or excessive sentence in the close scrutiny which is given to all Court Martial sentences. The noble Lord objects to Clause 4 in the Bill because it sends men dismissed from the Army to a civil prison, where they have to consort with felons. Although this is a change in the Act of 1881, it is a return to the principles of the Act of 1847. The noble Lord must remember that a soldier who has been dismissed with ignominy is only subjected to that extreme penalty after a series of the very worst offences—after having shown himself a thoroughly bad character. Such a man is not worth keeping in the Army; and the object is to free from military prisons those men who are not worthy of returning to the Army. That is the object of the Amendment, and I trust that the noble Lord will see that it is a desirable change to keep from the society of soldiers men who at the close of their sentence are not thought worth returning to the Army. As to military education, I would point out to the noble Lord that it is somewhat difficult in the course of an officer's career to make him both a first-rate lawyer and a first-rate soldier. The officer's time is limited. The object of the education given to the officer before entering the Army and afterwards is to make him, first of all, a first-rate soldier, and then as good a lawyer as time will permit. Military law is included in the syllabus at Sandhurst and Woolwich, and it is also included in the examinations for promotion. These facts show the anxiety on the part of the military authorities to give officers every opportunity of obtaining experience in legal matters. I am inclined to think that an officer of the present day has so much to learn that it is not always found easy to attend lectures on legal subjects such as the noble Lord referred to. All these suggestions, however, which the noble Lord has made, will receive the very closest attention from the military authorities, and I am certain also from my right hon. Friend, Mr. Stanhope.

*Lord NAPIER of MAGDALA: The noble Lord has dealt very severely with Courts Martial. I think there are very few officers who have had more Courts Martial pass through their hands than I have, except those connected with the headquarters of the Department, and I must say that a Court Martial is a very fair Court. It is conducted with great solemnity. Before a man is sentenced by Court Martial his character—that is, his defaulter's sheet is placed before the members of the Court—they judge not merely by the crime, but they judge by the accumulation of crime. A man receives, in the first instance, a very gentle punishment. The officers are very tender and gentle to offenders, who are at first warned and reprimanded; and anyone looking at the regimental books can see how careful officers are to deal gently with men for their first offences. If the soldier repeats his offence after being warned he is punished slightly, and heavy punishment only comes after repeated offences. I do not know at this moment whether Courts Martial in this country are attended by the Deputy Judge Advocate General, but until recently every Court Martial in India, where it was possible, was attended by a gentleman who had studied the law particularly. But military laws are very simple; the facts constituting the offence are generally very simple ones, and there are eye-witnesses in most cases. Besides, the sentence passed is reviewed by several authorities, and finally by the Judge Advocate General, who, if the sentence is considered too severe, may see his way to make a recommendation to mercy. Soldiers are much better educated now than they were fifty or sixty or even forty years ago; His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief has been able to lighten their punishments; much more clemency is extended to them than formerly. I venture to think that the noble Lord has taken a very severe view of Courts Martial. In my own opinion they are considerate and just Courts, always inclined, if possible, to mercy. I have myself never been a severe man towards soldiers. Forty years of my life were spent in India in the endeavour to ameliorate the condition of soldiers; but at one time mild punishment led to a large increase of crime. Crimes of violence and insubordination increased to such a degree that in one year no fewer than 250 of these offences had to be dealt with. I was then compelled to make very severe examples, and in the following year the number of crimes was reduced to 35. I hold that the whole tenour of military administration is one of careful watching, warning, and guiding the soldier, and punishing him only when milder measures fail.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow.

OVERTIME ON RAILWAYS.

Earl DE LA WARR, in rising to ask the Government when it would be convenient to lay upon the Table the Return promised last Session relative to the overtime work of railway servants, said: My Lords, this Return was ordered last Session. I know it is a Return that must require time and give a considerable amount of trouble to the Railway Companies. I should be very unwilling to appear unduly to press upon Her Majesty's Government and the Railway Companies for the Return; but I think it is not unreasonable to ask that this Return should be in your Lordships' hands at an early time.

The Earl of LIMERICK: I am asked by noble Friend (Lord Balfour of Burley) to answer this question. The Return to which the noble Earl refers was laid on the Table of your Lordships' House on the 28th of March. The Papers are now in the printer's hands, and will be circulated without delay.

INCOME TAX ON CHARITIES.

*Lord ADDINGTON, in rising to call attention to the recent Return (289), Income Tax on Charities, showing more than 200 claims for restitution of income tax rejected by the Board of Inland Revenue upon their own authority and upon an interpretation of the law which has been judged erroneous by the Supreme Court of Appeal in the case of the Moravian Brotherhood; and to ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Board of Inland Revenue would at once appeal from the Supreme Court to the House of Lords, or would revert to its former practice, and restore to the claimants the moneys levied as income tax upon exempt properties, and now retained by the Department, to the detriment of the charities concerned, said: My Lords, I propose, with all possible brevity, to call your Lordships' attention to the subject of the question I ask Her Majesty's Government. The Board of Inland Revenue have, in the exercise of their own discretion, taken upon themselves to impose income tax upon property which has hitherto been exempted. I venture to think that that procedure is tainted with illegality. I say so because I think it is not warranted by circumstances, and because I feel that the purpose at which it aims is to inflict a very serious injury upon the community at large and to discourage the exercise of that charity which is an essential element in all civilization. That being the subject of my impeachment, I feel that I am bound to make it good. The Income Tax, as we first knew it by history, was introduced by Mr. Pitt in 1799, and, as then constituted, it was strictly a personal tax. It is distinctly a personal tax now, but there has been this variation in the mode of the collection. Under Mr. Pitt's Act, every individual was bound to make a statement showing on one side of the account the whole of his property, and on the other the whole of his outgoings. There were exemptions of various kinds. For example, there was an exemption necessarily attaching to poverty. You cannot take from a man that portion of his income which, if he lose, he cannot subsist. Therefore, in Pitt's time, £60 a year was the limit below which incomes were exempt. Then there was another and a larger category of exemptions, and these were the multifarious charities with which this country is so happily distinguished. But in 1803, when the income tax came to be renewed, it was found to be convenient no longer to allow the exemption in the returns, but to assess all income at its source and refund to the parties entitled the income tax after it had been levied. In fact, it came to this—that instead of an individual making his own return of what he was worth and paying upon it, all his different properties were taxed at the source—his funds in the hands of his bankers, and so on in that indirect fashion. But the tax being levied in that way, it extended also to those properties which belonged to charities, and the Board of Inland Revenue, having first of all received the income tax upon all kinds of income, were charged with the duty of restoring to the charities the portion of the tax which referred to their several revenues. In that way they stepped into the position of trustees; they are receivers to the charities; they are, provisionally, only the holders of this money, and they are bound to give it back; and when, instead of giving it back, they retain it to themselves, they commit, in my humble opinion, a breach of trust. I will not myself use strong language with regard to the action of the Inland Revenue. I prefer quoting to your Lordships some tolerably strong evidence that I am not exaggerating in the words I use. In the year 1863, with the same amount of zeal which appears to be inherent in Somerset House, the Board of Inland Revenue desired to make certain exceptions to the charities which were then exempted, and they appealed to the Treasury for permission to exercise their judgment in the matter. They gave an interesting sketch of the history of the tax, and they asked to be left to follow their own devices in regard to exemptions. The answer of the Treasury at that time was as follows:—

> "The actual administration of the Act has acquired, it may be held, so much of prescription as ought to stand good, at least, against any interposition by an authority purely administrative. . . . . The subject is one which should be reserved to be dealt with by the Legislature."

I think that when, in the face of that instruction, we find the Inland Revenue, without any further notice, taking upon themselves to appropriate this money, they are committing an illegal act. I know it may be said, although an act may be illegal, still it may be politic, and it may be beneficial in its results. So far, however, from such a conclusion, we arrive at one the exact reverse. Charity, by reclaiming the vicious, by teaching the ignorant, and tending the suffering, minimizes all the social evils which injure the community at large. Taxation of charity obstructs its exercise and weakens the checks upon demoralization. I invite your Lordships' attention to the Return (289) on the Table of the House. You will find in it some hundreds of claims, various in their character, but rejected with remarkable uniformity upon the plea that they were "not within the scope of exemption." Societies for building and repairing churches were told that the only plea available for them was a "provision for funds held by trustees under Schedule C," whereas their claim rested upon an earlier exemption embracing their funds as devoted to "charitable purposes." The argument of the Inland Revenue lands them in this dilemma. The "repair" of churches is exempted, although not a charity, but the "building" of a church is not a charity, nor is it exempt. "Repairs" are exempt, if provided by funds assessed under Schedule C. They are not exempt if provided through rents under Schedule A, or interest under Schedule D. Repairs, now exempt under Schedule C, would be taxable if the securities were changed from Consols to Rents. Since this list was published the question has been fought out in the Law Courts, in the case of the fund of the Moravian Brotherhood, and in the Court of Appeal the unanimous decision of the Lords Justices has been given against the position taken up by the Inland Revenue, and that body ought not to be allowed to continue to act on a basis which has been held to be illegal. My Lords, I am not going to prolong needlessly my remarks upon the subject. I think I have said enough to show you that the matter is one which cannot be left as it is, and I will ask my noble Friend at the head of the Government whether the Government will choose definitely between the two alternatives—either to recur to the old system of exemption, or at once proceed, by way of appeal in the Moravian Brotherhood case, to obtain a final decision as to the law of the matter.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: The Inland Revenue Commissioners found their refusal to exempt charities from income tax, though hitherto exempted, on the judgment of a Scotch Court. The Members of that Court showed an undisguised jealousy of the interpretations of the English Court of Chancery passing as current or taking effect in Scotland. Those Judges claimed that the most ordinary and vulgar sense of the word charity should be taken in Scotland. In short, they would only recognize doles and such charity as the Charity Commission and public opinion in this country have set their faces against. But what do we know in this country of a Lord Ordinary? Most of us are more familiar with the Président de la Cour de Cassation; and by what right do the Inland Revenue Commissioners attempt to administer Scotch law and Scotch judgments in England? The Presidents of the French and Scotch Courts of Appeal both interpret a modern form of Roman Law. The Chairman of Inland Revenue would hardly base his action on a judgment of the French Court of Appeal. Why, then, should he, without the excuse of being a Scotchman, endeavour to enforce the equally foreign decision of a Scotch Court upon English taxpayers? Lord Justice Fry in his judgment last December in the English Court of Appeal upset the arguments of the Scotch Court, for he showed, from the number of technical words used in the Act, that charitable uses should be taken in the technical and not in the ordinary sense of the words. Another anomaly is to be found in the Return now under consideration. The Inland Revenue Commissioners show as much animosity to all funds intended to assist either building or repairs of churches or devoted to religious purposes as they could do if they were Commissioners of King Henry VIII. charged with rooting out "superstitious uses." But, although the funds of confraternities which are *quasi*-monastic bodies, if employed in church repairs, are exempt under Schedule C, yet if they get taxed under Schedule A no mercy is shown to them. As the destination of those funds is the same in either case, both funds, whether under Schedule A or C, ought to have the same exemption. There are 13 cases of refusal of exemption from income tax which might be called the worst. Of these six were refused on the ground that the deeds of trust were not binding; but if the accounts show that the money is used for the charities designated by the titles of the funds taxed, those accounts should be sufficient. Five charities are alleged by the Inland Revenue Commissioners not to be for a charitable purpose. Two of these are the Royal Humane Society and a Liverpool humane society. If it be a charitable purpose to make the life of the poor more endurable, is it not a charitable purpose to save life, to preserve the life of, perhaps, the breadwinner of a family? Two institutions for the relief of decayed governesses and poor ladies are said not to be charitable. Two other charities, one for confirmed invalids, the other a dispensary, are denied to be charities, because some small payments were made by those benefited by the charity. Where a sum is required by a poor person which he cannot provide, is it no longer a charity to provide him with three quarters of it because he found the other quarter? The action of the Inland Revenue Commissioners and the good work done by the Secretary of the Charity Commissioners, Mr. Gauntlett, in defending the interests of the charities, will drive many people to put their charities under the wing of the Charity Commission. It is contrary to public policy that charity should be taxed and discouraged: my earliest recollections in this House of the noble Marquess the Prime Minister are of his defence of the pious founder, and I hope that he will not allow him to be extinguished, and will save the charities from the expense of further litigation.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I have some difficulty in answering the two speeches we have just heard, because, although they are very eloquent and convincing, they should rather have been addressed by counsel to the Courts, and not in this House, where we cannot deal with the matter at all. This question is still *sub judice;* the Board of Inland Revenue are taking steps as rapidly as possible to bring up the question for the decision of this House. As soon as that is done we shall know what the law is, and if the law as then ascertained does not satisfy my noble Friend, it will be open to him to bring forward a measure to amend it. But while the matter is still in litigation it would be entirely contrary to the general practice for Members of the Government to express any opinion. I must say that it is rather hard that the Board of Inland Revenue should be subject to the adverse criticism of my noble Friend. My noble Friend near me (Lord Stanley of Alderley) has taunted me with the fact that I have more than once invoked the interference of this House with the action of the Charity Commissioners. It is true that I have done so, but in doing so I was only asking the House to exercise the power which has been reserved to this House by the Act of Parliament. Now my noble Friend is asking us to do that which the House never has done and I hope, never will do—namely, to interfere in litigation that is still going on.

*Lord ADDINGTON: May I just say, in reply to the noble Marquess, that the Board of Inland Revenue have given no signs whatever of their intention to appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: I have here the Statement of the Inland Revenue—

> "That on the advice of the Law Officers an appeal will be lodged against the decision in the case of the Moravian Brotherhood, and the final judgment of the House of Lords upon the points at issue will be obtained at the earliest possible date."

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

The Earl of MEATH, in rising to ask the Government whether they intended to remove the unsightly wooden hoarding which surrounds the vacant space in front of the National Gallery on its eastern and northern sides, to level and turf the ground, and to cover the blank walls of the Gallery with ornamental trellis work, said: The National Gallery is perhaps the most important building in the Metropolis. Those who have passed on the eastern side of that building, opposite St. Martin's Church, will have noticed a hoarding hiding a considerable space on the north and east of the Gallery. Formerly there was a building on the north which partly hid this space from view. But this building has been destroyed, and the hoarding now erected in its place is simply hideous to the eyes. If such a disfigurement had surrounded a County Council hall, it would long ago have been denounced. No such eyesore would be tolerated in any Continental City. I believed it is the permanent officials who are to blame for this, and I say that although I have for many years been a permanent official myself. The present Government is, I think, more alive to the improvement of the Metropolis than any other Government has been. I hope that I shall not be told that the Government are impecurious. I do not believe the country would grudge the expenditure necessary to make the National Gallery worthy of this Metropolis. We are told that the Government are going to build. But how soon? Why should not the ground be nicely laid out as an open space with flowers and shrubs until the final use of the site was decided upon?

LORD LAMINGTON: I am very glad that the noble Lord, who takes so much interest in the well being of the Metropolis, has put this question. There is another matter to which I might also call attention. Nothing has been done in regard to that hideous structure, Queen Anne's Mansions, which are, I believe, to be raised another 20 feet. Again, there are the new buildings at Albert Gate, which are being raised to an enormous height. I believe we shall never have proper regulations with regard to buildings until we have some permanent authority vested with power to prevent the erection of buildings which effect a disfigurement of the Metropolis.

***LORD HENNIKER**: My Lords, the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner is, as a matter of course, always quite ready to take the responsibility of the care of any of the buildings and works entrusted to him, and he has no wish to say that it is not the duty of the Office of Works to look after the National Gallery. I am glad that it is not necessary for me to plead on this occasion that the reason for not making the improvement he suggests is that we cannot get the money, although I think the noble Earl who brought forward the question will find that it is not so easy to get money out of the Treasury for improvement as he seems to suppose.

THE EARL OF MEATH: On the contrary, I put that as a most important point, but I said you ought to get the money.

***LORD HENNIKER**: With regard to what my hon. Friend has said about the height of the buildings in Hyde Park, I think he is misinformed. I have no special information at the present moment, because I had no notice of the question, but from the information I have, I think I am right in saying my right hon. Friend the First Commissioner has succeeded in reducing the height of these buildings very considerably. The question brought forward by the noble Lord will, I need hardly say, receive every attention, for we all know the great interest that has been taken in the improvement of the buildings of the Metropolis; but I may say that this is a question which requires a great deal of consideration, and there are some very great difficulties to be overcome. As I suggested just now, it is not a question on this occasion of asking for money; it is a question of spending money wisely. I am told that it would be very expensive indeed to remove this hoarding and to put up railings round the National Gallery. There are also some walls round the National Gallery which must be dealt with, and if operations are undertaken at the present time, they might do no permanent good, for the ground of which the noble Lord speaks may before long be required for building purposes.

THE EARL OF MEATH: How long?

***LORD HENNIKER**: We can hardly say how long. The noble Lord will see that under the circumstances the matter requires more consideration than he at first supposed. All I can say is that I will undertake that the question the noble Lord has brought forward receives immediate and careful consideration.

***EARL FORTESCUE**: My Lords, I think there is one point that has been too much lost sight of by successive Governments. They take down buildings for improvement, and we know how large a sum is spent in renting private buildings for official purposes, and that is because there is always a difficulty in finding the requisite money for providing proper permanent offices on the spaces thus extravagantly kept vacant. Now, when a large space is even temporarily left vacant in a populous district, I think it would be worth while to spend some money to give the tens of thousands living near the temporary enjoyment of an open space thus for a while rendered available to them, and to the hundreds of thousands passing by the sight of something pleasing instead of the reverse during that time; and I am glad to hear that Her Majesty's Government will take this matter into their consideration. I am informed that near the Law Courts the private munificence of a generous man, who does not wish his name to be known, is about to do what, even temporarily, will be a source of great enjoyment and health to many in that crowded district.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to Seven o'clock, until To-morrow, a quarter after Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 4*th April*, 1889.

QUESTIONS.

WINNIPEG AND HUDSON'S BAY RAILWAY COMPANIES.

MR. ERNEST BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby) asked the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies with reference to the Act of the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba, passed in 1886, which guaranteed the interest on the 1886 issue of the Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Railway Companies, bonds for 25 years, if he was aware that the road was commenced, and the capital subscribed in England; whether he was aware that the present Premier of Manitoba, in November, 1888, publicly and officially recognized this guarantee in a letter to the Chairman of the Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Railway Company; but that on 2nd March, 1889, the Premier and the Legislature repudiated the statutory guarantee by passing an Act, to which Her Majesty's assent is required; whether the Secretary of State would advise Her Majesty to withhold Her assent to this Act of repudiation; and, whether he would make such representations to the Government of the Dominion of Canada as will direct their attention to the recent action of the Provincial Legislature?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, Toxteth): Her Majesty's Government have no cognizance of this subject, which is entirely one for the Provincial and Dominion Governments and Legislatures to deal with. The Acts of the Provincial Legislatures do not come under the supervision of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but are allowed or disallowed as seems right to the Governor General of Canada, after taking the advice of his Ministers; and it would therefore be improper for the Secretary of State to make official representations on this subject to the Government of the Dominion, who necessarily have it fully before them in all its bearings.

SMALL POX IN SHEFFIELD.

MR. THEODORE FRY (Darlington) asked the President of the Local Government Board when the report, promised last year, on the epidemic of small pox in Sheffield, would be presented to the House; and, what was the cause of such a long delay in its preparation?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's-in-the-East): The preparation of the report promised last year has been a work of considerable labour. It was presented to the House at the beginning of the Session, and copies of it have now been delivered for distribution among Members.

SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN HERRINGS.

SIR HENRY TYLER asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention had been called to the great quantities of Swedish and Norwegian herrings which have of late been imported into this country, and sold, when cured, as Yarmouth herrings; whether he was aware of the great injury that has thus been done to the East Coast fisheries of this country; and, whether, in the interests of British fishermen, as well as of the British public as consumers, he could see his way to take any steps to remedy this state of things?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The attention of the Board of Trade has not been specially called to the particular point referred to by the hon. and gallant Member. If it is the fact that great injury has been inflicted on the East Coast fisheries, the matter appears to be one on which representations might be made to the Board of Trade by the Local Fisheries Committees of County Councils that may be appointed under the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act of last Session.

SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether the present pension and superannuation rules were construed to mean that a permanent civil servant, on attaining the age of 60 years, is entitled as of right to claim pension, or whether in practice the Treasury might and did exercise any discretion in considering, with reference to the health and capacity of the applicant, whether it was for the interest of the public service that full pension should be granted and another man appointed; whether in practice effect was given to the old rule of the Civil Service, that normal pension was only earned when the applicant had given his whole time to the public service; whether in some recent cases civil servants had, while holding public office, accepted posts under companies or private persons, and had eventually retired from the public service on large pensions, not because they were incapacitated for work, but in order to continue and extend such private occupation; and whether Mr. J. Russell, just retired from the National Debt Office, had for many years been in receipt of another salary as Receiver, Secretary, and Manager of the Burry Port and Gwendreath Valley Railway Company?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): A civil servant on reaching the age of 60 years is entitled to retire and to receive the amount of pension for which he is qualified by length of service. No civil servant is qualified for a pension on retirement unless he has given his whole time to his official duties. No civil servant who retires under the age of 60 can receive a retired allowance, unless on a medical certificate that he is permanently incapable of discharging his duties, and I am not aware of any case such as those described in the third paragraph of the hon. Member's question. Mr. Russell, a principal clerk in the National Debt Office, retired last year at the age of 62, after 42 years' service, on a pension of £466 13s. 4d. I understand that he held an office in connection with a small commercial undertaking which was either wholly or mainly the property of his own family. I am not aware whether any remuneration was attached to the office. On Mr. Russell's retirement the head of his department certified that he had served for 42 years with diligence and fidelity to his satisfaction, and that he had fully discharged his official duties.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Is it not the fact that there is a rule that a person recommended for a superannuation allowance shall have devoted the whole of his time to the public service?

Mr. JACKSON: A certificate from the head of the Department that the person proposed to be pensioned had discharged his duty with zeal and ability and to his entire satisfaction, would, I apprehend, be deemed sufficient.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Is there not a long established rule that an ordinary pension shall not be regarded as having been earned unless the person who is to receive it has devoted the whole of his time to the public service?

Mr. JACKSON: The Superannuation Committee have no power to go behind the distinct rules laid down for their guidance, one of which is that if the Civil servant is 60 years of age, he is enabled to retire with a superannuation allowance in accordance with the number of years he has served; and if the Superannuation Committee are supplied with information, such as I have described, from the head of the Department, it would be irregular for the Committee to enter into a separate inquiry.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Is there, or is there not, an existing rule of long standing, that the ordinary pension shall not be conferred unless the Civil servant has devoted the whole of his time to the public service?

Mr. JACKSON: Yes, I think there is; but I am not sure that a difficulty might not arise if the definition of the hon. Member as to "whole time" were pushed a little further.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I have not given any definition of "whole time."

FLOGGING BOYS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Lord Advocate whether his attention had been drawn to a conviction, by Sheriff Hamilton, in the Edinburgh Sheriff Summary Court, on 9th March, of five boys, charged with having, without leave, hawked newspapers for sale on the North British Railway Station; whether three of the boys, who had been previously convicted of similar trespass, were sentenced to six stripes with a birch rod, and the remaining two lads to two stripes; and whether these sentences of flogging for such simple trespass were authorized by law?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Buteshire): I have communicated with the Sheriff as to this matter, but as he is temporarily absent from home I have not yet got information to enable me to answer the question. I shall therefore be obliged by the hon. Member postponing the question for a week.

MR. BRADLAUGH: I will postpone it until this day week.

FAILURE OF THE POTATO CROP.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he was aware that in the entire coast line and the mountainous districts of the county of Donegal, the failure of the potato crop of last year had been as complete as in 1879; that the present occupiers of those districts had little if any seeds, potatoes, or oats; and that the quality of the seed potatoes is very inferior; had his attention been directed to the sworn testimony of Sergeant Kenny, Royal Irish Constabulary, at the trial of Mr. John Kelly, at Bunbeg, Gweedore, in March last, who deposed that last year's crop of potatoes was the worst he had ever seen, after a residence of 14 years in the county of Donegal; was he aware that ordinary seed potatoes, which were usually sold at 2d. or 2½d. per stone, were now being sold at 6d. per stone, and that if the people were able to buy seed potatoes in sufficient quantities, the supply could not be procured in those districts for any money; and whether, in view of these facts, the Government intended to take any steps to guard against the impending famine in Donegal?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In the county of Donegal seed potatoes are not plentiful. The 1887 crop was exceptionally good. The 1888 crop was below the average, but variable. The October crop was good. The price of seed potatoes ranges from 4d. to 6d. So far as can be ascertained, no special destitution or prospect of famine exists in the neighbourhood, or distress with which the ordinary Poor Law is unable to cope.

MR. MAC NEILL: These statements have been made not only to myself, but to other hon. Members, and they come from the parish priests of the locality, who all testify to the appalling condition of the people I am afraid that if inquiry only is to be made it will be too late.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have instituted inquiries to the best of my ability, and I think that the distress, if it had been as great as the hon. Gentleman imagines, would have shown itself in a more marked manner by its effects in the Poor Law districts.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Has the right hon. Gentleman any objection to send a Commissioner to investigate and report?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Local Government Board did make a Report some time ago, and they adhere to the substance of that Report.

A VESTRY MEETING IN SUFFOLK.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention had been called to the fact that, at a vestry meeting held at Haughley, in Suffolk, on Friday morning last, for the purpose of electing parish officers for the year, a motion was made, and duly seconded, that the meeting should adjourn until the evening, in order to enable the majority of the parishioners to attend; whether he was aware that the Chairman refused to put the motion, and insisted on the meeting adjourning forthwith to the schoolroom, and on the proceedings being continued there, with the result that the children had to be turned out of school, in spite of the fact that the room would have been available for a vestry meeting in the evening; whether the Chairman, in declining to put the motion, was exceeding his powers; and whether any steps would be taken by the Local Government Board in regard to the matter?

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies to the question, may I ask whether the school in question is in the receipt of a Parliamentary Grant, and if so, by what authority the school-house was used for a meeting and the discipline of the school interfered with?

*MR. RITCHIE: I must ask the hon. Member for Saffron Walden to put the question upon the Paper. With regard to the question of the hon. Member for the Eye Division of Suffolk, I am informed by the Chairman of the Vestry meeting referred to that there were present at the meeting some 50 parishioners representing the farmers, tradespeople, and labourers of the parish, and the Vestry-room being too small to conveniently hold the meeting, he adjourned it to a room situate in the school-house close by, with the concurrence of one of the trustees of the school who was present, and arranged that the teaching should be carried on in a room in the same building. He informs me that he did not put the motion for adjournment to the meeting, as he considered that there was not a full representative meeting to conduct the business for which the Vestry was called. The matter is not one in which I have any power to interfere; but I am advised that any motion for adjournment until a later hour, which was duly proposed and seconded, should have been put to the meeting.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that on Friday last the children had to be turned out of Haughley schoolroom in consequence of a vestry meeting having adjourned from the vestry to the schoolroom in the morning, although the room would have been at the disposal of the meeting in the evening; and, whether the attendances of the children on that day were cancelled owing to their being sent home?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question until Monday. I have called for information but have not yet received it.

CITY POSTMEN.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea) asked the Postmaster General whether he can now give any further information as to the date when the improvement in the hours of attendance of the City postmen (in reply to their petition of June, 1887), is likely to take place; and, if he has received a memorial asking payment for the excess time performed by them during the year 1888; and, if so, when an answer may be expected?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, University of Cambridge): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that a very considerable improvement in the hours of attendance of the City postmen has been carried out, and the men are feeling the relief afforded. Their average attendance is now about seven hours and fifty minutes a day. I have received a memorial asking for additional payment for "excess time" in 1888, but no such payments have ever been made, and I do not think it would be proper to make them for out-door work which can be indefinitely prolonged by the men themselves.

MIDDLESEX LAND REGISTRY.

MR. JENNINGS (Stockport) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether the office of the Middlesex Land Registry was connected with the office of Land Registry, and whether it was under the control of the Treasury or any Department of the Government; whether it was the fact that Lord Truro, as Registrar of the Middlesex Land Registry, received fees to the average annual amount of £5,000 a-year, and scarcely ever entered the office, the whole of the work being done by deputy; and in whose gift was this appointment?

*MR. JACKSON: The Middlesex Registry was created by a Statute of Queen Anne, and has no connection with the Land Registry. The Lord Chancellor has power to make rules for the regulation of the office. No portion of the cost of the Registry falls on the Exchequer. The entire cost is defrayed from the fees, and the Registrars, of whom there were originally four, are by Statute entitled to retain the surplus fees for their own benefit. Lord Truro is the sole surviving Registrar; but under an Act of 1859 the Queen's Remembrancer, who had previously been *ex-officio* a Registrar, continues to receive for the Exchequer his share of the net fees. This share at present represents one-half, and amounted for the year 1888-9 to £4,054 18s. 2d. The appointment of Registrars is in the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief

Justice alternately; but on the occurrence of the last three vacancies no appointments were made, and the office will disappear on the passing of the Land Transfer Bill, now before the House of Lords.

IRELAND—MR. MURPHY.

Mr. LEAMY (Cork Co., N.E.) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland under what authority, and by whom, Mr. Murphy had been appointed Chief Receiver in the Land Judges' Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland; what was his salary; and what legal qualification did he possess; whether business hitherto transacted before the Judges, in reference to management of landed estates and the supervision and control of receivers over the same, in pursuance of the Judicature Act, had been, and was now, transacted before Mr. Murphy sitting in Chambers; and whether his appointment revived the office of Receiver Master, which was abolished by the Act; whether any rule appointing Mr. Murphy had been made; and, whether any rules as to procedure before him had been made; and, if so, had they been, or would they be, laid before Parliament?

*The SOLICITOR GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Madden, University of Dublin): I am informed that Mr. Murphy has been appointed Chief Receiver in the Land Judges' Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland by the Land Judge, with the consent and approval of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland and with the sanction of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, pursuant to the provisions of the Land Estates Court (Ireland) Act and the Judicature Act. His salary has been fixed at £1,000 a year. Mr. Murphy does not possess legal qualification, nor is he required to discharge legal business. A considerable portion of the business hitherto transacted through solicitors before the Judges in reference to the details of the management of landed estates and the control of the Receivers over the same, in pursuance of the Judicature Act now comes in the first place before Mr. Murphy direct from the Receiver, without the intervention of a solicitor. But in every case Mr. Murphy's memorandum is submitted to one of the Receiver Judges and by him converted into a ruling, with such modifications as he may think proper. It is calculated that by this change costs to estates will be saved to the extent of at least £10,000 a year. This appointment does not revive the office of Receiver Master. No rule appointing Mr. Murphy has been made. He has been temporarily appointed by order dated February 12, 1889, and has no right to pension or superannuation. No rules as to procedure before him have been made, as he merely prepares memoranda or suggestions for the Judges' consideration.

EMBEZZLEMENT IN THE NAVY.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his consideration had been given to the circumstances attending the embezzlement by W. W. Braddon, late Assistant Paymaster of H.M.S. *Helicon*, of £3,818, which sum had since been written off as a dead loss to the Crown; whether his attention had been drawn, in particular, to the following passage in a communication, dated 14th December, 1887, from the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury to the Admiralty:—

> "But whether there was laxity or not in the examination of Mr. Braddon's accounts, it is acknowledged that he was enabled to perpetrate his frauds through the persistent neglect by the Commander of the *Helicon* to obey Article 523 (c) of the Queen's Regulations:"

who were in succession commanders of the *Helicon* from Midsummer 1884 to January, 1886, the period of the frauds; what punishment had been imposed upon those officers for their neglect; and, had they been called upon to make good any portion of the public loss?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): The facts are as stated. My attention has been drawn to the Treasury letter referred to. The case was fully investigated, and it was considered that there was no laxity in the examination of accounts. In regard to what the Treasury described as "persistent neglect" on the part of the commander it may be as well to explain exactly of what this neglect consisted. The paymaster of a ship has from time to time to prepare a statement showing the "balance of cash." These statements are submitted to the commander, who, after satisfying himself of their correctness, signs them before their transmission to the Admiralty. All this was done by the commander of the *Helicon.* His remissness consisted of his handing the statements after signature back to the paymaster for despatch to the Admiralty, instead of despatching them with his own hand, as directed by the regulations, and the frauds were perpetrated by the paymaster falsifying the figures of the statements after the commander had signed them, and before dispatching them to the Admiralty. The commander was reprimanded, and cautioned to be more careful in future, but as the neglect in effect consisted of his failure to recognize in one of his officers (and one who had hitherto borne the highest character) a possible rogue, it was not considered that this neglect was deserving of a more serious punishment than the censure which he received. I may add that the regulations have since this occurrence been made more stringent. The lieutenants commanding were Lieutenants Winsloe and Tisdall.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Is the noble Lord aware that in the Navy Appropriation Account, this year, there is an entry on page 61, that in the case of a receipt which was given in error, half the value is charged against the officer who gave it. I wish to know why this rule should not be applied also in the case of the more highly paid officers?

LORD G. HAMILTON: If the hon. Member wants to know why the regulation has not been carried out in this case, he had better put a question upon the Paper.

H.M.S. *BRITON.*

MR. PICKERSGILL asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention had been specially called to the following facts: That H.M.S. *Briton* was completed at an original cost of £66,726; that, up to the 31st March 1886, the further expenditure for repairs upon this ship was £50,189; that, between the 30th September 1886 and the 2nd February 1887, an additional sum of £1,745 was expended in repairing the ship; and that, finally, the ship was sold in August 1887 for £3,541; and, whether he would explain under what circumstances a large expenditure was incurred for repairs within 12 months of the sale of the ship?

LORD G. HAMILTON: With the exception that £11,500 out of the £50,189 was for stores, and not for repairs, the facts are generally as stated in the question. The ship was originally commissioned in 1871, and had been at the time of her sale actually in commission for 11 years and nine months. The question of the expediency of spending the £1,745 on the repairs of a ship within so short a period of her being sold was very fully discussed, and it was only after careful consideration of the duties required by the exigencies of the service on the East Indies Station, especially with regard to the suppression of slavery in the Persian Gulf and East Coast of Africa, that it was decided to spend this sum in preference to letting her lay up in a perfectly useless condition for some months. She was sold mainly because she was hopelessly infected with white ants.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): In what way was this ship sold? Was it by public auction or private contract?

LORD G. HAMILTON: I think she was sold by public auction, but I would again ask that a question of that kind should be put on the Paper.

IRELAND—DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONERS.

MR. HAYDEN (Leitrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the nature of the appointment as Magistrates of the Divisional Commissioners was such as to compel Clerks of Poor Law Unions to put them on the list of *ex-officio* Guardians for the unions in which they reside?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am advised that the nature of the appointment as magistrates of the Divisional Commissioners is not such as to render them eligible to act in any case as *ex-officio* guardians of a Poor Law union.

THE SPECIAL COMMISSION.

MR. HAYDEN asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many days had the County Inspector of Leitrim and the District Inspector and Head Constable of Carrick-on-Shannon been absent from their duties whilst attending as witnesses for the *Times;* when were they examined; who was in charge of the district of

Carrick-on-Shannon during their absence; what was the maximum period during which the rules permit a constable to remain in the County Inspector's office; and had that term been exceeded by constables in Carrick-on-Shannon; if so, can he state on what grounds?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the County Inspector of Leitrim and the District Inspector of Carrick-on-Shannon were absent from their stations for 108 days and 27 days respectively while attending on subpœna in London in connection with the Special Commission. No Head Constable was absent from Carrick-on-Shannon. The County Inspector was examined in the end of January, and the District Inspector about the middle of December. District Inspector Connaughton was in charge of Carrick-on-Shannon district. No constable was employed in the County Inspector's office except the ordinary police clerks. There is no rule fixing the period in which a constable may be so employed should the amount of the work necessitate such employment.

IMPRISONMENT IN DEFAULT OF BAIL.

Mr. HAYDEN asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many persons had been sentenced in Castlerea District (County Roscommon) to terms of imprisonment in default of finding bail under the statute of Edward III. within the last six months; how many of the defendants consented to give bail; how many were now in prison undergoing their sentences; what was the offence with which they were charged; and what had been the extra cost of Constabulary in the district during the last 12 months?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that within the last six months 25 persons in Castlerea District, who were ordered to be bound over to keep the peace and be of good behaviour under the statute mentioned, were committed to prison in default of finding bail. Of this number five were willing to give bail, and three actually did so, the two others being unable to get anyone to go bail for them. Eighteen of these persons are now in prison. The offences charged were as follows:—Unlawful assembly, 19 persons charged; disorderly conduct likely to lead to a breach of the peace, 4; disorderly conduct in besetting a dwelling-house, 2: total 25. There has been no cost to the district for extra constabulary for the past twelve months.

TITHE DISTRAINTS IN WALES.

Mr. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department to the authorities of what counties and county boroughs the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire applied for additional police assistance for the tithe distraints at Penbryn; and whether such applications were made after the information as to the intention of the peasants was supplied to him by the Superintendent of Police on March 16th?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): The Chief Constable of Cardiganshire informs me with regard to tithe distraints at Penbryn that after receipt of the information supplied to him by the Superintendent of Police he telegraphed for assistance to the Chief Constable of Carmarthenshire, some of whose constables were with him on the 19th ult., when the conduct of the people was so threatening that he telegraphed on the night of the 19th to the Chief Constable of Glamorganshire for more constables.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire): Were there any applications made for additional police assistance before the 19th?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The first application of which I was informed was made on the 19th.

THE COUNTY COUNCILS.

Colonel LLOYD ANSTRUTHER (Suffolk, Woodbridge) asked the President of the Local Government Board, whether, under "The Local Government (England and Wales) Act, 1888," every member of a banking firm with whom an ordinary current account is kept either by a County Council or by an authority under it, was thereby disqualified from being a County Councillor?

*Mr. RITCHIE: I have no authority to determine questions relative to the disqualification of County Councillors; but I may say that the Muncipal

Corporations Act provides that a person shall be disqualified from being elected, and for being a Town Councillor, if and while he "has, directly or indirectly, by himself or his partner, any share or interest in any contract or employment with, by, or on behalf of the Council"; and that this provision has been made applicable to County Councillors. I presume that some particular case has given rise to the question of my hon. Friend; but whether such case would come within the enactment to which I have referred is a matter upon which I must not be understood as expressing any opinion.

IRELAND—FATHER FARRELLY.

MR. WILLIAM CORBET asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why, having held over the warrant for Father Farrelly's arrest for five weeks without any attempt to execute it, although he was available at any time, it was thought necessary to break into his house; could he cite any authority for such a proceeding; and why, having taken the extreme course of breaking into Father Farrelly's house, was he allowed to go voluntarily to prison unaccompanied by a police escort?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As has already been more than once stated, the police broke into Father Farrelly's house because they had information that led them to believe he was there. As has also been stated, I am advised that the proceeding was, under the circumstances, legal. As regards the last paragraph, I have to state that Father Farrelly was accompanied by two policemen in plain clothes. It was impossible to collect a large escort, and it appears that a small escort would have run serious danger of attack had they been in uniform.

MR. SEXTON: I must press for a fuller answer. I want to know why the rev. gentleman, having written on the 21st January to say that he was ready for arrest, was not arrested; and why the police broke into his house in the early morning for the purpose of arresting him, although they afterwards allowed him to go to Wexford Gaol without any police escort whatever? What is the legal authority that enabled the police to break into Father Farrelly's house in order to arrest a gentleman who was charged with incitement?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I apprehend that the warrant would constitute sufficient legal authority.

THE BELFAST BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the attention of the Local Government Board has been directed to the Report of the proceedings of the Belfast Board of Guardians at their usual weekly meeting held on 20th March, 1889, at which a Committee of the Guardians reported to the Board serious frauds and other irregularities in connection with the supply of new milk in the Union Stores, and stated that no matter what question they put to Robinson, the storekeeper, he tried to evade it, and that the answers given by him were misleading and inaccurate; is the Chairman of the Committee correctly reported as having stated that he had come to the conclusion "that Robinson was either culpably guilty of prevarication or totally incompetent to discharge his duties, or both combined;" do the defalcations for a short period amount to £61 15s. 4d.; and will an independent inquiry be immediately ordered so as to fix responsibility upon the defaulting offiicials, and thus have the amount of the deficit restored to the credit of the rates?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Clerk of the Belfast Union reports that some verbal statements reflecting on the storekeeper have been made to the Board of Guardians by a Committee appointed by them to inquire into the subject of the milk supply. It appears that the storekeeper, instead of deducting from the contractor a sum of 4d. for each gallon short of the supply required in accordance with the contract, represents that he deducted the actual cost only of the substitute provided in lieu of the deficiency, the difference between the two amounts being represented by the sum of £61 15s. 4d. The Governors, at their meeting on Tuesday last, adopted a Resolution requesting the Local Government Board to hold a sworn inquiry into the matter. The request is now under consideration.

EVICTIONS IN COUNTY SLIGO.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the evictions recently carried out on the estate of the Messrs. Knox, in the parish of Curry, County of Sligo; whether the following statement made by the *Sligo Champion*, regarding some of the 17 families evicted, or visited by the evicting party, are substantially true—

> "Michael Walsh is a widower, and has six little children. On the 2nd of last January one of the children caught fever, and the whole family was attacked in turn. The father has but just recovered, and the last child attacked was actually suffering from fever when she was carried out of her home and placed on a little straw on a bleak hill-side. She was subsequently removed by the relieving officer to the fever hospital. . . . After the door of the next house attacked (Thomas Millar's) had been broken in, it transpired that Mrs. Millar, terrified by the attack on her house, had fainted, and could not be removed. . . . Pat Walsh is over 80 years of age. For more than ten years he has been confined to bed. His wife is nearly as old and as helpless as he. He was wrapped in a few pieces of bedding, and carried out from the miserable hut, and thrown on the street;"

and whether, if those statements are well founded, the Government will, in future, take care that the forces of the Crown shall not be employed to carry out evictions under similar circumstances?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The statements are not substantially nor even approximately true. The evicted persons were not tenants, but trespassers, having been in unlawful possession for several years. None of them appear to have been suffering from fever, nor was any person suffering from illness carried out and placed on a bleak hill-side. I am informed that there is no hill-side, bleak or otherwise, at Walsh's house. The Relieving Officer was not present. Mrs. Millar complained of illness, but, so far as I know, she did not faint. She expressed her readiness to move, but subsequently declined to do so, and was not further disturbed on that day. A woman named Kennedy was also left undisturbed on that day, as she pleaded illness. On the following day she was examined by the doctor, who said there was nothing the matter with her, and on the next day she walked about the place using strong language. Patrick Walsh was examined by the doctor, and apparently there was nothing the matter with him. His wife, who is stated not to be helpless, several times proclaimed her intention of again taking forcible possession.

Mr. CLANCY: Inasmuch as these statements have appeared in the Irish papers for a fortnight without any contradiction from the parties concerned, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us the authority on which he bases his contradiction?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The authority on which I base my contradiction is the information supplied to me by the officers in the district. I may point out that if I were to correct every erroneous statement in the Irish Press I should certainly require an additional private secretary to assist me.

THE IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what has been the result by the offer of the Irish Land Commission of sale by public auction, at Listowel, on the 26th ultimo, of two farms bought by the tenants Jeremiah Cregan and Michael Mullally, under the Ashbourne Act, through the agency of the Purchase Commission; how many years' purchase of the rent was allowed to the landlord in each case, and whether it was calculated on the old rent or on the judicial rent; what is the arrear due to the Land Commission by the tenant purchaser in each case; whether, in one of these cases, the annual instalment payable by the tenant is £12, whilst the Poor Law valuation of the holding is only £8 10s.; and, how many other farms were bought by the tenants on the same estate upon similar terms of purchase?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners inform me that Cregan and Mullally having made payments on account, the sales were at their request adjourned. The prices agreed upon between landlord and tenant, in each case, were advanced. In Cregan's case the rate appears to be 14½ years' purchase of the judicial rent; in Mullally's case the rate was 20 years' purchase of the judicial rent. The arrear due by the tenant purchaser in each case is six pounds, being the instalment which became due 1st November last. In Mullaly's case the Poor Law valuation appears to be £8 15s., and the annual instalments £12. The average price on the entire estate appears to be 17·7 on the rental, the prices varying from 13·3 to 21·7. The Commissioners add that the apparent disproportion, in some cases, between the Poor Law valuations and the rents is accounted for by the fact that upon many of the holdings in question there had been a considerable expenditure in improvements by the landlord.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Epping Division of Essex, as an Ecclesiastical Commissioner, whether the Ecclsiastical Commissioners have considered the application of Mr. John Lloyd, to be furnished with the boundary outlines of the estates held within the Metropolitan area by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; whether the Commissioners are aware that the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, the Office of Public Works, the Corporation of London, the Metropolitan Board of Works, and most of the great corporate and individual owners of property in London, have already furnished Mr. Lloyd with the boundary outlines of their estates, to be entered on his projected ground plan of London; and, whether, having regard to the great public importance of obtaining an accurate ground plan of the estates within the Metropolitan area, the Commissioners will supply Mr. Lloyd with the information he requires?

*Sir H. SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): The Commissioners have considered the application referred to by the hon. Member, and are aware that some of the corporate and individual owners of property in London have been able to comply with Mr. Lloyd's request; but the properties of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (which have come and are still coming into their possession at different times, and the titles to which are derived from so many divers ecclesiastical corporations) are so various in their character, and are so scattered in small plots over the Metropolitan area, that it would be excessively difficult, if not impossible, for the Commissioners to define, as is suggested, on any one plan the numerous holdings, some of them exceedingly small, in which they are wholly or partially interested.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will afford Mr. Lloyd all the information he can in the matter; it would be of great utility in the discussion of the Land Question.

Sir H. SELWIN-IBBETSON: The Ecclesiastical Commissioners will give every facility in their power to Mr. Lloyd.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Did not the Ecclesiastical Commissioners distinctly refuse to give Mr. Lloyd information?

Sir H. SELWIN-IBBETSON: I fancy the hon. Gentleman is referring to a correspondence which took place some time ago. I believe a letter to that effect was sent to Mr. Lloyd.

THE DEFENCE OF THE COASTS.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can be so good as to give some more particular indication as to where in his speeches is to be found the plan of the Government for uniting under one authority the Land, Sea, and Amphibious Forces for the defence of the British Coasts; whether the difficulty has been got over that one class of men cannot be allocated any share of the work of land batteries and submarine mines because those things are under the War Office, and another class cannot serve on floating batteries because those are under the Admiralty; and, whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the possibility of the greater development for the defence of our coasts of an amphibious class of defenders, ready to serve for coast batteries, submarine mines, and local floating batteries?

Lord G. HAMILTON: In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I beg to say that I have never made any statement of the kind mentioned in the question, neither have I ever even heard of any proposal to establish the amphibious force he refers to. As to the second part of the question, men who volunteer for service under the Admiralty cannot be compelled to serve under the War Office, and *vice versâ*, and there are no floating batteries in the possession of the Admiralty.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty why more has not been done, or whether Her Majesty's Government will now try to do more to enlist the great material available, in the shape of fishermen on the East Coast of Scotland, for the defence of those shores, by enrolling them in some sort of Marine Militia or Local Marine Reserve, upon terms more consistent with their position and avocations than have hitherto been offered, and designed to make them available for local defence as distinguished from a Naval Reserve for the Regular Navy?

Lord G. HAMILTON: The second class of the Royal Navy Reserve was established for the purpose of enrolling the class of men named in the question, and I cannot suggest any plan for more usefully employing their services in the event of war. I should be opposed to any proposal that might have the effect of deterring these men from joining the Reserve in favour of a corps which would entail their employment in particular localities, and thus circumscribe their sphere of usefulness.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I beg to give notice that, unless something is done in the direction suggested, I shall vote against all increases of the Regular Forces.

IRELAND—PRISON TREATMENT OF MR. E. HARRINGTON.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the wife of Mr. E. Harrington, M.P., accompanied by Mr. T. Harrington, M.P., on reaching Tullamore Prison on Monday 1st April, were not allowed to see Mr. E. Harrington, though more than three months of his term had expired; whether Mr. Harrington had been allowed to receive a single letter or a single visit during these three months; whether the reason assigned for this refusal to permit letters or visits is that he gets no marks as a consequence of being engaged in preparing his defence before the Special Commission; whether Mr. T. Harrington, on telegraphing to the Chairman of the Prisons Board, was informed in reply that the Chairman should communicate with the Governor by post; and whether the visit is to be disallowed for the reason stated?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As far as I can understand from the Reports received from the Prisons Board, the facts are substantially as stated in the question. The prison authorities do not seem to have sufficiently taken into account the exceptional circumstances attending Mr. Harrington's imprisonment, due to the necessity Mr. Harrington is under of preparing his defence before the Special Commission; but the error of judgment has been rectified.

BOTANY IN THE NEW CODE.

Mr. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether the subject of botany, mentioned in the list of specific subjects in Section 15 of the new Code, comprehends instruction in practical gardening and in the uses of plants and of their value as food; and whether it is necessary that evening classes should be in every case taught by certificated teachers?

*Sir W. HART DYKE: Any person over 18 years of age approved by the Inspector may be recognized as a teacher of an evening school. A footnote to the Schedule of specific subjects gives power to the managers to submit to the Inspector a progressive series of lessons in any of the subjects mentioned, and this, in connection with botany, would include the uses of plants and their value as food. I doubt its including instruction in practical gardening, except for the purposes of illustration.

IRELAND—FATHER M'FADDEN.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland whether Father M'Fadden and the other prisoners, who have been committed for trial on the charge of the wilful murder of District Inspector Martin, will in ordinary course be tried at the next Assizes; whether as these Assizes will not be held for a period of four months from this date, the prisoners will be kept in custody during all this period; and whether it is the intention of the Government to change the venue in this case under the provisions of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, which empower the Crown to change the place of trial from the county in which the crime is alleged to have taken place to any other county in Ireland?

Mr. MADDEN: In my reply to a former question I gave all the information in my possession on the subject of the question of the hon. and learned Gentleman. As regards the last paragraph, I may state that the depositions and proceedings in the case will be laid before the Attorney General, who will take the course which, in the exercise of his discretion, he deems to be right in this matter.

COMMUNICATION WITH LIGHT-HOUSES, &c.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the resolution passed at the recent meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, in favour of placing lighthouses, coastguard stations, and lifeboat stations in electrical communication with the main telegraphic system of the country; whether, in consideration of the fact that a vast amount of money value, and several hundred thousand persons, pass Tory Island every year, he will endeavour to have this recommendation carried out with regard to it; and, whether the Government will take steps, as soon as possible, to complete a work of so important a national character?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not seen a copy of the resolution referred to. The matter, however, is not one coming within the cognizance of the Irish Office, but apparently within that of the Board of Trade.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY.

Mr. WILLIAM CORBET (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, inasmuch as there is no item for supplying books either in Class 2, page 89, of the Civil Service Estimates, under the head "House of Commons," or under the head "Cost of Printing and Stationery," Class 2, page 165, he can state under what head the Vote for supplying books for the Library of this House is taken?

*Mr. JACKSON: Books required for the Library of the House of Commons are purchased by the Stationery Office, on the requisition of the Librarian, and are charged to Sub-head J of the Stationery Office Vote, "Printing, &c., for the two Houses of Parliament."

IRELAND—IMPERIAL AID TO LOCAL RATES.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Imperial contribution to local rates will be issued to the Irish local authorities?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am informed that it is expected that the proportion of the Probate Duty grant, payable to the Boards of Guardians in Ireland, will be distributed during the present month; but the similar distribution to the road authorities cannot be made till they have furnished certain necessary information, and will, therefore, probably have to be deferred till next month.

EVICTED TENANTS.

Mr. COX (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is a fact that the police have torn down placards requesting the neighbours of Pat Haugh, an evicted tenant in the parish of Kilmihill, county Clare, to help in building a hut to shelter him, his wife, and eight children; and whether such interference on the part of the police is authorized by law, or has been directed or sanctioned by the Irish Government?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the man mentioned had been evicted from the holding upwards of a year ago, when he owed four years' rent, his eviction not being considered one of hardship. Notices were posted in the district on the 17th of March last calling on the people to assemble at the place to build a hut, and others calling on them to join the National League which was suppressed in that district as an unlawful association. The police in the discharge of their duty tore down these notices.

MEETINGS OF COUNTY COUNCILS.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether summonses calling meetings of County Councils and their Committees must, in case they are not left by policemen at the abode of Members, be delivered in registered letters; and, if so, whether he will consider the advisability of proposing some method of delivering summonses which would obviate the expense of registration?

*Mr. RITCHIE: The Municipal Corporations Act provides that a summons to attend any meeting of a Town Council shall be left or delivered by post in a registered letter at the usual place of abode of every Member of the Council at least three days before the meeting; and this provision now applies to summonses to attend the meetings of a County Council. There does not appear to be any similar requirements as regards summonses to attend meetings of Committees. The cost of registering the letters containing the summonses will be but small, and the necessity for registration could only be removed by an Act of Parliament. I do not at present see any sufficient reason for introducing a Bill to alter the law on this subject.

NOMINATION OF COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

Mr. THOMAS ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Lord Chancellor will, when Lords Lieutenant nominate persons for the office of County Magistrate, ask for the opinion of County Councils in the same manner as the opinion of Town Councils is now asked when Borough Magistrates are nominated?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Lord Chancellor that it is not accurate to represent the recommendations of the Lords Lieutenant as nominations. The Lords Lieutenant have peculiarly good opportunities for ascertaining the requirements of the counties and the fitness of gentlemen for the Benches upon which they will act. The reasons which have induced the Lord Chancellor in recent years to invite Town Councils to assist him with their local knowledge of the personal fitness of the gentlemen he proposes to appoint are not applicable when he receives a recommendation from the Lord Lieutenant of a county.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LABOUR IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Swiss Government have invited representatives of the Government of Great Britain to attend a Conference of the chief European Powers, to be held in September next, to consider the establishment of International Regulations for the improvement of the conditions of labour in manufacturing industries; and, if so, whether the Government have decided to take part in that Conference?

*Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; the Government have received such an invitation, and it is now under their consideration.

DEMERARA.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have any information with reference to a reported rising of coolies in Demerara; whether the road in course of construction by the Colony to the north-western frontier is nearly completed; and whether any claims in the territory lying between the Mazaruni and the Cuyuni have been granted to Colonists?

Baron H. de WORMS: Her Majesty's Government have no information on the subject of the first question. Had any such rising occurred, the Governor would doubtless have reported it by telegraph. The Secretary of State has no recent information as to the progress of the work referred to in the second question. The answer to the third question is in the affirmative.

RAILWAY RATES.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Government will consider the desirability of making maximum rates in no case exceed those existing prior to the increased scale put in force in many cases last year, unless it can be shown that the traffic resulted in loss or other reasonable cause given, before agreeing to introduce provisional orders to give effect to the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I think there is some confusion in this question between the maximum rates and the rates actually charged. I am not aware that there was any increase last year in the maximum rates chargeable by the railway companies. As regards the future, the Board of Trade, in fixing the maximum rates, will take into consideration not only existing statutory maxima, but also other circumstances, such as the rate actually charged.

POLICE GRANTS TO COUNTIES.

MR. DUGDALE (Warwickshire, Nuneaton): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether payment of the Police Grant in counties, under Section 16 of "The County and Borough Police Act, 1856," for the half-year ending the 25th March last, is "a right accrued before the 31st March last," within the meaning of Section 24, Sub-section 1, of the Local Government Act, 1888;" and, whether any provision has been or will be made for payment to the county of Warwick of such grant; and, if not, why not?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first paragraph is in the negative. No right accrued to receive money from the Exchequer in respect of a local police force until a certificate of efficiency was given by the Inspector. No such certificate has been given, nor, consequently, has any right accrued before the 31st of March, 1889, except in respect of the police year ending the 29th of September, 1888. The contribution in respect of the police year from September 1888, to September, 1889, will come from the County Council under the 24th section of the Local Government Act.

IRELAND—FATHER M'FADDEN.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if it is true, as reported in the Press, that, in the trial of Father M'Fadden and 22 other prisoners at Letterkenny, on Saturday last, on a capital charge, Constable Richardson gave evidence for the Crown against the prisoners; and that during his cross-examination Mr. Hamilton, the presiding magistrate, remarked: "I am afraid that the witness is hardly in a fit state to be examined;" if the witness was then removed; and, if anything has been done, or will be done, with the deposition?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that the facts are substantially as stated in the question. The deposition was not perfected, and remains with the Petty Sessions Clerk.

MR. SEXTON: Will any notice be taken of the insolent language used by the constable?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course, as a matter of discipline, the case will be inquired into.

THE STRANDING OF H.M.S. *SULTAN*.

SIR EDWARD REED (Cardiff): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the rock struck by H.M.S. *Monarch* about the year 1880, at the entrance of Malta Grand Harbour, was marked on the Chart of the time; whether the rock found on the measured mile outside Malta Harbour by H.M.S. *Polyphemus*, in 1886, was marked on the Chart of that period; whether the rocks above mentioned as well as that upon which the *Sultan* struck have been proved to be due to volcanic action or to defective surveys; and, whether any Chart of the Maltese Islands has been made since 1857?

LORD G. HAMILTON: No. The *Monarch* struck on a small head which had five feet less water on it than the chart showed. The *Polyphemus*, when at torpedo practice inside the line marked on the chart for running the measured mile, found less water on a bank running out from the land than marked on a chart. An examination is now being made of the depths in the vicinty of the rock on which the *Sultan* was stranded, with a view of ascertaining whether the conformation of the bottom has altered. The survey of the Maltese Islands generally was concluded in 1863, but occasional re-surveys of portions—principally of the harbours—have been since made.

SIR W. LAWSON: Will the noble Lord say whether there is any truth in the report in the Press that on the Charts belonging to some of the other Powers this wreck was marked?

LORD G. HAMILTON: There was a rumour that there was a Chart in the possession of the Admiral Superintendent at Malta, which had this rock marked on it. We telegraphed out to know if the information is true, and we learn that it is not true.

THE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford), who had on the Paper the following question:—To ask the Vice Chamberlain whether, in view of the fact that the Animals (Amendment) Order of 1st March, 1889, was passed before the Privy Council were aware of the prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease in Germany; that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is separated from Germany by a frontier of very considerable length, across which, in spite of all precautions, the disease may be conveyed; and that the importation of animals from the Netherlands under present circumstances cannot fail to increase the risk of re-introducing foot-and-mouth disease into the United Kingdom, the Government will consider the propriety of rescinding or suspending the Order in question, which provides for the admission of animals from the Netherlands into the interior of this country without being subject to slaughter or to quarantine? said: At the request of the Vice Chamberlain, I desire to postpone my question until to-morrow; but may I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether we can rely upon receiving an answer to it to-morrow?

Mr. CHARLES DARLING (Deptford) had also on the Paper the notice:—To ask the Vice Chamberlain whether it is the intention of the Lords of the Privy Council to permit the import of live sheep from the Netherlands, and not to require them to be slaughtered at the port of landing, on the ground that the sheep of the Netherlands are now free from foot-and-mouth disease; whether it is the intention to absolutely prohibit the landing of sheep from Germany on the ground that the German sheep are not free from such disease; and whether the Lords of the Privy Council intend no longer to enforce the Law concerning the slaughter of infected animals at ports of landing, but to permit the entrance of live sheep from countries free from disease, and absolutely to prohibit those coming from infected countries; and, if so, whether any provision will be made for the hundreds of people who will be thrown out of employment round Deptford Cattle Market?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith): I must ask my right hon. Friend, and also my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Deptford (Mr. C. Darling), to postpone their questions until Monday. Inquiries are being made into the facts of the case, and, looking to the importance of the subject, I am sure my hon. Friends will see it is desirable we should have full information before we take any steps in the matter.

RESIGNATION OF TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will agree to the Motion for a Return as to the resignation of telegraph clerks, which stands on the Paper for to-day?

*Mr. RAIKES: There appears to be no departmental objection to the Return which the hon. Member has asked for being granted, except that it will involve a considerable expenditure of time and trouble. At present I am not aware what purpose would be served by giving the Return; but if the hon. Member will inform me on this point, I will consult the Secretary to the Treasury whether we should be justified in incurring the expense involved in its preparation.

LONDON AND SUBURBAN POSTMEN.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he can now give any definite reply to those clauses of the Petition presented by the London and suburban postmen in August, 1887, which, in his answer of the 27th October of that year, he reserved for future consideration?

*Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member I have to state that, of the four heads of the Postmen's Petition which remained unanswered, one, viz., that relating to the question of wages, is still under consideration. Another, relating to the rate of extra pay for extra duty when employed indoors, will probably be conceded at no distant date. The third, which was for summer uniform, has been conceded. The fourth, having reference to the substitution of boots for other articles of uniform, I am unable to concede—at all events at present.

IRELAND—EVICTIONS ON THE CLONGOREY ESTATE.

Mr. CLANCY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, on the night of Wednesday, the 27th March, 13 houses from which tenants had just been evicted were burnt or levelled to the ground by crowbars and other appliances on the Clongorey Estate of Mr. Penthony O'Kelly, in the County of Kildare; whether the agent of the estate, a person named Routledge, under whose superintendence the houses referred to were given to the flames, and also the cart on which was carried the petroleum used in firing the dwellings, were guarded as they passed from house to house by police, in addition to those constables engaged on "protection" duty; whether, when the sparks from the burning roof the home of an evicted tenant, John Connolly, seemed likely to set on fire other thatched houses in close proximity, and a crowd of people showed a desire to prevent such an occurrence, the police on duty ordered them off the scene; whether a man named Peter Fullam went to the burning house of his friend and neighbour, an evicted tenant named Andrew Fox, to take away some articles of furniture that had been left in the house after the eviction, but was hustled back with violence by emergency men and policemen; whether, when he afterwards asked to be allowed to take the sashes out of the windows that they might not be destroyed with the rest of the fittings of the dwellings, he was again violently thrust back by the same persons; whether in all 30 policemen armed with rifles and eight policemen armed with batons were engaged protecting the emergency men; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to continue to extend the protection of the forces of the Crown to persons engaged in burning the houses of evicted tenants?

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): May I ask whether these Clongorey tenants are not the same people who have had their crops destroyed time after time by floods during the course of the last few years?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware of the state of things suggested by the hon. Gentleman. With regard to the question on the Paper, I have to say I am informed that 13 houses on the Clongorey estate, from which tenants had been evicted, were either levelled or burned. No police protection was furnished to the persons engaged in this proceeding, which was quite unexpected by the police authorities. The force of police present in the locality is greatly overstated in the question—there were, in all, eight armed with rifles (and not 30 as alleged), and eight armed with batons. These 16 men were in the evicted houses protecting the caretakers. There were also four men armed only with batons on patrol in the neighbourhood. It is not true that the agent with a cart carrying petroleum for the burning was guarded from house to house by the police, but a cart carrying provisions to the caretakers was going round to the houses, and two constables whose duty it was to convey provisions to their comrades who were in the houses on protection duty availed themselves of this opportunity of doing so. The statements in the third paragraph are altogether incorrect. The burning of John Connolly's house originated accidentally; the police gave all the assistance in their power to put it out; there was no danger of the flames spreading from it as there was no house nearer than 30 yards distant, and the wind was blowing in the opposite direction. The statements in paragraphs four and five are not true as regards the police, and they have no knowledge of their being true as regards the emergency men. I may perhaps say, in answer to the question which stands next in the name of the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Mr. Sexton), it is not true that all the houses except one were burned.

MR. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last paragraph of my question, namely: Whether the Government authorize the employment of police in the destruction of property after the decrees of the Courts have been fully executed by the eviction of tenants; and also by whose authority the police accompanied the emergency men on this errand?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot lay down any general rule as to police protection on occasions of this sort; each case must be dealt with on its own footing. As I pointed out, this action on the part of the agent was wholly unexpected, and the presence of the police on the spot was not at all due to the anticipation that the houses were to be destroyed, but to the fact that they had to be there in order to protect the caretaker.

Mr. CLANCY: Will the right hon. Gentleman inform us how it was that the inspector of police went round the day before to all the houses with the agent and indicated what might be left standing and what might not?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sceptical as to the accuracy of that statement.

Mr. SEXTON: May I ask whether, as the emergency men took crowbars and combustible materials with them the night before, the police were not aware of the object of the enterprize?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Of course there was a point at which the police became cognizant of what was going on, but there was no notice given to them.

Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): May I ask whether the police would not be discharging their duty by affording protection to any person engaged in a legal act?

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman issue instructions for the guidance of the police in any future cases of a similar kind?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No. I have already said that no general rule can or ought to be laid down for these cases. Each one must be considered on its merits.

Mr. CLANCY: Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman's scepticism would be removed if I ask him whether the reason given——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. CLANCY: If the reason given——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. Gentleman is now making a certain statement.

Dr. TANNER: May I ask——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS—DISCHARGE OF WORKMEN.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is the fact that certificates are given in the following form to the workmen who have been recently discharged from the Devonport Dockyard—

> "H.M. Dockyard, Devonport.
>
> "This is to certify that ——— has been employed ——— years and ——— months in this dockyard as a hired (joiner, or as the case may be), and during that period his character and conduct have been very good, and he is a very good workman. He has been discharged in consequence of reduction of hands.
>
> (Signed) J. M. Huddy,
> Chief Constructor.
>
> Approved,
> ———————,
> Admiral Superintendent."

whether he can state how many of the total number of men recently discharged had been employed for a longer period than one year, either consecutively or at different times; what steps are taken to ascertain which of the men should first be discharged, whether on account of efficiency or duration of service; and whether, in effecting such discharges, any consideration is paid to character and good conduct?

Lord G. HAMILTON: No workmen recently discharged received certificates of the kind referred to in the question. Of the total number of men discharged 169 had been employed for more than one year, but only seven had been employed continuously for a longer period than one year. Efficiency and duration of service are both considered by the yard officers in selecting men for discharge. Consideration is paid to the character and good conduct of workmen. The Secretary to the Admiralty, in replying to the same question on Tuesday, stated that 11 men had been employed for a longer period than one year, but this number included men who had received notices of discharge which were subsequently withdrawn.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I beg to give notice that I shall refer to this matter at the earliest opportunity on the Estimates.

POLITICAL MEETINGS IN THEATRES.

Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the holding of political meetings in any theatre under the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction is an infringement of the licence granted by him, or in contravention of any rules?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Lord Chamberlain that the answer is in the negative.

IRELAND—CAVAN BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

Mr. FLYNN (in the absence of Mr. O'Hanlon): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland whether his attention has been called to the Resolutions of the Cavan Board of Guardians, at their meeting on the 9th March last, in which they expressed their condemnation in strong terms of the recent order of the Land Commission by which the schedule of rents has been fixed in 1888, and alleged that, although the yield of produce was small, the cost of production was no less than in former years; and whether the Government will consider the advisability of withdrawing the schedule, and amending the recent Acts relating to land; whether his attention has been directed to resolutions passed at a meeting of the priests and tenant farmers of Nolagh, near Bailieboro, County Cavan, protesting against a rise of rent in that district by the Land Commission; and whether the Government intend to take means to remedy this grievance?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Nothing is known of the resolutions in question at the Irish Office, though it is quite possible such resolutions have been passed. The hon. Gentleman will recollect that the alteration of rent was to be made in relation to prices, and not to yield. No legislation of the kind to which the hon. Gentleman appears to point is in contemplation.

FATHER M'FADDEN.

MR. JAMES STUART: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any evidence, other than police evidence, was brought forward before the magistrates at Letterkenny, connecting Father M'Fadden, or the other prisoners, committed for trial for the murder of Inspector Martin, with the death of that constable; and whether it is correct, as asserted in the *Daily News* of Tuesday last, that the statements made by the constables were "made in some instances after the constables had had frequent opportunities of talking over among themselves as to what had happened?"

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think the hon. Gentleman will feel it would be very improper for me to answer a question with regard to the character of evidence being given in a case now proceeding.

THE TRIAL OF MR. P. J. CONLAN.

MR. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory): I beg to ask Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland whether he has read a report of the actual proceedings in trial of Mr. P. J. Conlan, proprietor of the *Carlow Nationalist*, as the result of which he is now undergoing a sentence of two months' imprisonment; whether he is aware that the sole ground upon which the Crown asked the Magistrates to order Mr. Conlan to give bail for his good behaviour, or to be imprisoned, was that he published in his paper of the 12th of January a report of the ordinary fortnightly meeting of the Ballyadarus and Wolfhill Branch of the Irish National League in the Queen's County on the previous Sunday; whether the attempt to show that boycotting resulted from the publication of the report was disproved by the evidence of the only Crown witness, Sergeant Downes of the Constabulary, who swore that the boycotting had commenced some days before the paper containing the report was published; whether he is aware that the report was published as an ordinary item of news, without note or comment; and whether there is any other instance of the Statute of Edward III. being employed to prevent the Press from publishing the reports of meetings?

*MR. MADDEN: I have examined into the actual proceedings in this case, as the result of which Mr. Conlan is now undergoing imprisonment by reason of his refusal to give bail. The complaint, as stated in the summons, was, in substance, that the defendant, on the 12th of January, unlawfully published in a newspaper called the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* certain notices whereby he unlawfully incited certain persons to violate the laws of the land, and to obstruct and impede the administration thereof, and to set certain of Her Majesty's subjects against certain others of them, and whereby he incited certain of Her Majesty's subjects to combine to impede, obstruct, frustrate, and defeat the execution of lawful writs of possession issued forth of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, and County Court ejectment decrees. The acts complained of, and for which the defendant was ordered to give sureties to be of good behoviour, did not consist in publishing the report of a meeting as an ordinary item of news, but in publishing notices of the character and under the circumstances stated in the summons; and the magistrates, being of opinion that the defendant had been guilty of such conduct, ordered him to give sureties to be of good behaviour. As regards the third paragraph, the information before me does not enable me to state whether the boycotting of Mrs. Brennan had or had not commenced before the 12th of January. I cannot, however, see that this would be material if the magistrates were of opinion that the continuance of the boycotting resulted from the publication of the notices.

Mr. W. A. MACDONALD: Does the hon. Gentleman persist in his statement made last Tuesday, that this sentence was under a Statute of Edward III., in view of a telegram which I have to-day received from Mr. Conlan's solicitor, to the effect that it was under the ordinary law?

*Mr. MADDEN: I said that the magistrates exercised jurisdiction under an Act of Edward III., but they also possessed sufficient jurisdiction under the ordinary law?

Mr. CLANCY: Were these notices simply part of proceedings which were reported?

*Mr. MADDEN: The documents in question were in the nature of notices which appeared in this newspaper.

Mr. CLANCY: Were they merely an account of a public meeting?

*Mr. MADDEN: In part they were. But if the magistrates, having the evidence before them, were of opinion that they were published for the purposes alleged in the summons, the mere fact that they were embodied in the report of a public meeting would not give them immunity.

INDIA—PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE FACTORY ACT.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.) asked the Under Secretary of State for India if it was the case that the Indian Government was not going to support the proposal to extend the Factory Act to India; and, if so, could he state the reasons why the people of India should be deprived of the benefits of the Act?

The UNDER SECRETARY for INDIA (Sir John Gorst): Proposals for amending the Indian Factories Act have just been received from the Government of India, and they are now under the consideration of the Secretary of State in Council.

Mr. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): Will the hon. Gentleman say if he will be able to lay a copy of these proposals on the Table of the House?

Sir JOHN GORST: I cannot make any promise of that kind as to proposals that are now under consideration.

PERPETUAL PENSIONS.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he would now, in accordance with his promise made in July last and repeated in December, fix an early day for the discussion of the Resolution disagreeing with the Treasury Minute on Perpetual Pensions?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am unable to indicate a particular day at this moment; but I have every reason to believe an opportunity will be given for discussion in the course of the month of May.

BURIALS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether it was the fact that, as the Law and Rubrics now stand, it would be illegal to bury a distinguished Englishman, if unbaptized, in Westminster Abbey; and, if so, whether he would consider the advisability of dealing with this matter by a separate Bill, or by an amendment of the Burials Act?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am informed that, so far as the Rubric is concerned, if any person is buried in a church, no service other than the Burial Service in the Book of Common Prayer can be used, and this service cannot be read over any unbaptized person. Whether an unbaptized person could be buried in Westminster Abbey without the performance of the Burials Service is a legal question on which I do not feel myself qualified to express an opinion. I am not prepared to recommend to the House any amendment of the Burials Act with reference to this question.

PRINTING OF RETURNS.

Mr. HENRY H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.) asked the First Lord of the Treasury what authority decided whether a Return ordered by the House, or a Paper presented to the House, was to be printed; and, whether the printing of Returns could be accelerated; also, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that a Return moved for by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, and laid on the Table on Thursday, March 27, and which the Secretary to the Admiralty was allowed to refer to in debate on Monday on the express promise that it should be in the hands of Members on Tuesday had not yet been distributed?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In reference to the first part of the question, I have to say that as the right hon. Gentleman is probably himself quite aware, the printing of Returns is by a fiction supposed to rest with the House, the House ordering them to be printed; but a discretion is usually exercised by the Librarian. Returns are usually printed as a matter of course; but when they are not of general interest they are not printed, or the hon. Members who move for them are communicated with, and the question is raised as to whether it is desirable that they should be printed. I will do my best to accelerate the printing by the exercise of any influence I have. With regard to the particular question of the right hon. Gentleman, the delay did not occur with the printer, who exercised great speed. The Return is one of considerable intricacy and importance, and it had to be corrected twice. The proof was returned to the printer on Tuesday evening. I regret that it should not yet be in the hands of Members.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give a Return of all the Papers laid on the Table of the House which have not been printed?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I do not think that the multiplication of these Returns is desirable. If the hon. Member will inquire of the Librarian, he will obtain the information he asks for; and if there has been any abuse, it can be corrected at once. Any Returns of general value and use are printed and circulated.

MR. HENRY H. FOWLER: May I ask whether it has not been the custom of the House for a long series of years to appoint at the commencement of each Session a Printing Committee to assist Mr. Speaker in the printing of Papers? Although that Committee was not in the habit of meeting, would it not be desirable to re-appoint it this year, in order that hon. Members, through that Committee, may have the opportunity of expressing an opinion in regard to any papers?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If the right hon. Gentleman desires to raise that question, I shall be very glad to consider it. But the Printing Committee has never really expressed any opinion on the question of printing Papers. I have been a Member of the Printing Committee during the 20 years I have sat in Parliament, and I have never been summoned to attend it. I do not think it would be useful to revive it. I do not think any useful Papers have been omitted, but the desire has been to save hon. Members from the irruption of printed matter into their rooms.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether he proposed to give an opportunity for the discussion of the New Code before Easter, or whether the discussion would be postponed until after the holidays?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It will not be possible to provide an opportunity for the discussion of the New Code before Easter.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, East) asked the First Lord of the Treasury if he could now state whether the Report of the Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis for the year 1888 would be laid upon the Table of the House before the Vote in Supply for the Metropolitan Police was taken?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY): Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer. The Chief Commissioner will make every effort to expedite the publication of his Report; but I regret that I cannot give any pledge that the Report will be in the hands of hon. Members before the Vote is taken.

MR. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I would ask whether, if we do not get this Report, we have any opportunity at all of knowing the details of the expenditure of the Metropolitan Police? They are not given in the Estimates as they used to be.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: I think the hon. Member is speaking of another Parliamentary Paper, not the Paper to which the question relates.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Has not a promise been previously given that this Paper should be circulated, as it is impossible to discuss the question of the Metropolitan Police without it? The fourth month of the year is come, and the Report asked for is for last year.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: Every effort shall be made; but in previous years this Report has been presented to the House at the very end of the year. I regret there should be this delay, but no doubt the staff of the Commissioner is fully worked.

MR. J. STUART: I will put down a question as to the other Papers.

THE CROFTER EMIGRATION BOARD.

MR. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Board of Management connected with the recent Crofter Emigration had actually been appointed; and, if so, whether there was any objection to state the names of the gentlemen composing the Board; whether the Government proposed that this Board should be permanent; whether the Government would issue a Memorandum stating the functions and powers of this Board; and whether all communications connected with the Crofter Colonization should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board; and, if so, where was he to be found?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: A Board was appointed under the Royal Sign Manual on the 26th of December last for the purpose of carrying out a scheme for the colonization in the Dominion of Canada of crofters and cottars from the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This Board consists of the Secretary for Scotland (for the time being), the High Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada in London (for the time being), the Lord Provost of Glasgow (for the time being), and Mr. Thomas Skinner, one of the Directors of the North-West Land Company of Canada. The Commission appointing the Board specifies its powers and functions, and was published in the *London Gazette* of December 28 last. I will lay a copy of the Commission on the Table of the House if the hon. Gentleman wishes me to do so. The Board has not been permanently appointed, but only for the purpose of the special scheme defined in the Commission. Mr. J. G. Colmer is temporarily acting as Secretary to the Colonization Board, and communications with reference to the business of the Board may be addressed to him at Dover House, Whitehall.

IRELAND—PRESIDENCY OF THE QUEEN'S COLLEGES.

SIR HENRY ROSCOE (Manchester, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it was a fact that a Treasury Commission of 1876 reported in favour of the appointment to the Presidency of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland of Professors of the said Colleges; and, if so, whether in the appointment of the Presidency of Queen's College, Belfast, due regard would be paid to this recommendation?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Treasury Committee of Inquiry of 1876 expressed the opinion that in the case of a vacancy in the President's office of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, the new President should in the first instance be sought for among the existing Professors of the three Colleges, their object apparently being to combine in one person the duties of President and Professor. As I have already stated in reply to a previous question on the subject of the existing vacancy at Belfast, the Lord Lieutenant will, I have no doubt, in making the submission of a name, give due weight to all the circumstances of the case.

LOANS TO CROFTER FISHERMEN.

MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland), on behalf of Dr. M'DONALD (Ross and Cromarty), asked the Lord Advocate whether the boats and gear supplied to the Crofter Fishermen in the Highlands was insured by the Government or by the owners; if they were insured and anything happened to them, would the Fishery Board sustain any loss of money thereby; if no such loss could be sustained, why did the Fishery Board require such further securities as consent of creditors' securities that instalments should be punctually paid, &c.; and had the instalments hitherto been paid; if not, what was the amount of the arrears or the percentage thereof?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The Fishery Board insure boats, including sails, spars, and other gear, but not nets or lines at the expense of the borrower to the fullest extent Insurance Companies will grant —viz., three-fourths of the value. If anything happens to an insured boat the Board will lose the difference between three-fourths and nine-tenths, this being the sum advanced in loans. In reply to the third part of the question, I beg to refer the hon. Member to an answer I gave on March 25th, in which I stated that the object of requiring concurrence of creditors is to protect the recipients of loans from having their boats arrested by creditors. Of the instalments amounting to £780 10s. 5d., which up to the present date have become due. £163 1s. 4d. still remains unpaid; eight instalments wholly, and 13 partially in arrears. The following are the districts to which the 21 cases of arrears belong:—Wick, 14; Helmsdale, 1; Stornoway, 2; Barra, 1; and Loch Broom, 3.

THE NEW WRIT FOR CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the noble Lord the Member for the Petersfield Division what was the cause of the delay in moving the Writ for Central Birmingham, and when it was intended to move for it?

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): In reply to the hon. Member I have to say there has been no unusual delay in moving for the Writ. It is my intention to move for it early next week, and I will give due notice both to the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. A. Morley) and to the hon. Member for Rugby (Mr. Cobb) if he is the Whip of any fresh Party.

MR. DILLWYN (Swansea): I beg to give notice that to-morrow I will move for the issue of the Writ.

ORDER OF BUSINESS—EASTER HOLIDAYS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) repeated the question which, at the request of the First Lord, he deferred from Tuesday as to the arrangement for the Easter Recess.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have endeavoured to gather the views of hon. Members with regard to the Easter holidays, and I believe that only on one occasion in the last 20 years has the House not risen on the Tuesday morning before Easter; and on that occasion it was because of circumstances of extreme pressure of Public Business. This being so, and feeling that I am following the general wish of the House, I shall move before Tuesday, the 16th, that the House adjourn after the Morning Sitting on Tuesday until the following Thursday week.

PRISONERS (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I desire to ask you a question, Mr. Speaker, on a point of procedure. On the 13th of last month I introduced a Bill into the House, which was debated during the entire day. I find from a document in my hands that the main points for which I then contended appear to have been conceded by the Chief Secretary and the Irish Prisons Board. Apart from making certain offenders first-class misdemeanants, my main points are conceded. Under these circumstances, I want to know whether I should be in order in asking leave to withdraw my Bill which stands on the Paper for to-day?

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member can withdraw his Bill if the Amendment to the Bill is first withdrawn.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): May I ask the Chief Secretary whether he proposes to lay these new Prison Rules before the House?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir; they have been laid on the Table. Perhaps I may say that, although I have not the least objection to the withdrawal of the Bill of the hon. Member for South Tipperary, I am afraid he somewhat mistakes the scope of these amended Rules.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intended to introduce his Budget?

*MR. G. J. GOSCHEN: On Monday, the 15th.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith), asked when the Scotch Local Government Bill was likely to be before the House; and whether the Government would consider the expediency of referring it to a Committee of Scotch Members?

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.) asked if the First Lord was now able to name a day for carrying into effect the promise of the Government in regard to the subject of the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in Ireland on Sunday?

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): When are we likely to see the long-talked-of Tithes Bill?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There is a great demand on the part of hon. Gentlemen for legislation, which the Government will endeavour to satisfy as rapidly as possible. My right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate is about to give notice of some of the measures in regard to Scotland to which he is anxious the attention of the House should be directed. With regard to the Sunday Liquor Bill for Ireland I am not able to fix a day for its consideration, but the Government realize their obligations in the matter, and will certainly endeavour to carry out their engagement in regard to that question. I cannot name a day for the consideration of the Tithe Bill.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): What will be the course of business on Government days next week?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government propose on Monday to proceed with the notices of my right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate, first of all disposing of the remaining stage—which I hope will be only a stage—of the Resolutions on Naval Defence. The remaining Resolutions are simply machinery for carrying into effect the Resolution about to be reported to the House, and if the House affirms that Resolution the Resolutions with regard to the machinery will, I hope, be agreed to. I do not believe there is any desire on the part of the House to delay the passing of those Resolutions. I will state to-morrow what business we propose to take on Thursday. Probably what I have already stated will be sufficient for the right hon. Gentleman's purpose at tagent. [Mr. Gladstone signified his oneıt.]

Lanc J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I beg
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mission on nnd.
the hon. GenLEY (Islington, N.): I
right hon. Gentleman if he can name a day for resuming the adjourned debate on the poor in large towns? Many private Members are interested in the subject, which was debated for only four hours, and two and a-half hours out of that time were occupied by the Front Benches.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: It is not in my power to name a day for the resumption of this debate. The pressure of business precludes me from offering any Government time.

Mr. WOODALL (Hanley): The right hon. Gentleman did not inform the House what day he proposes to submit his Motion for the adjournment for the holidays. The effect of the intimation he has given will be to confiscate the day I had secured for the discussion of the Women's Suffrage Motion, and as may be supposed I shall not be disposed to submit to this without a protest. But I suppose the proper time will be when the Motion for adjournment is submitted to the House?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I will give notice on Monday of my intention, and will probably on the Friday make the Adjournment Motion at the commencement of business; but I say that with some reserve. I must call the hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that he has fixed his Resolution for a day upon which, with one exception, the House has not sat for 20 years.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): For the convenience of Members who have to go a long distance for a short holiday, will the right hon. Gentleman undertake that no Irish Estimates shall be taken on Thursday next?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think I may safely give that undertaking.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): May I ask what is the nature of the responsibility under which the Government feel bound to provide for a discussion of the Irish Sunday Closing Bill; whether the right hon. Gentleman will give sufficient notice of his intention, and how soon after Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Due notice shall be given.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON: May I ask how it is that Supply is not the first Order of the Day, Tuesday having been taken for Supply?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government gave no undertaking of that kind. We undertook to give an equivalent for the time taken on Tuesday, and this I have endeavoured to do. There is pressing necessity for taking the Report of the Naval Defence Resolution to-day.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON: We have not had an answer as to considering the expediency of referring the Scotch Local Government Bill to a Committee of Scotch Members.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can give no pledge of that character.

Mr. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): Will the Scotch University Bill be taken before Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Not before Easter.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): I think I may be excused for pressing for some further answer in reference to the debate on the poor in large towns. It will be remembered that only four hours were occupied in that debate.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: It is out of my power to make time, and I am sorry to say I can give no further answer.

Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM: I am well aware of the right hon. Gentleman's inability to make time, but the question is of paramount importance, and I think half a day might be spared from other matters.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): It would be a convenience to Irish Members if the right hon. Gentleman would promise that no Irish business shall be taken on the Thursday and Friday after we re-assemble at Easter.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I will undertake not to proceed with any Irish Estimates next Thursday, and that ample notice shall be given of the business to be taken on the Thursday after the Recess. There is every desire to consult the convenience of Irish Members.

COUNTY AND BOROUGH LUNATIC ASYLUMS (ENGLAND AND WALES)

Returned ordered, "of the County and Borough Lunatic Asylums in England and Wales on the 1st day of January 1889, showing,—

(1.) The total acreage of the sanitary district (urban or rural) in which each Asylum is situated;

(2.) The total rateable value of the district as assessed to the Poor Rate on Lady Day 1888, and in districts where a General District Rate is in force, the same as assessed to the General District Rate;

(3.) The acreage of all lands and buildings occupied for the purposes of the Asylum in each case;

(4.) The rateable value of the lands and buildings so occupied as assessed to the Poor Rate on Lady Day 1888, and in districts where a General District Rate is in force, the same as assessed to the General District Rate under the provisions of 16 and 17 Vic. c. 97, s. 35."—(*Mr. Moubray.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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NAVAL DEFENCE.

Resolution [1st April] reported.

"That it is expedient to authorise (*a*) the expenditure of a sum not exceeding £21,500,000, for the purpose of building, arming, equipping, and completing for sea vessels for Her Majesty's Navy; of this expenditure a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in the seven years ending on the 31st day of March 1896; and a sum not exceeding £11,500,000, to be issued out of moneys provided by Parliament for Naval Services during the five financial years ending on the 31st day of March 1894."

Resolution read a second time.

*Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I must throw myself on the indulgence of the House, as, from the consequences of a very bad cold, I may not be able to submit the matters to which I desire to call the attention of the House as clearly as I could wish; but I will do so to the best of my power. The first part of the Resolution we are now asked to adopt deals with the amount of money—twenty-one and a-half millions—proposed to be expended under the new programme on ships and guns for the Navy. On this question we had a full debate on Monday last, and the House arrived at a conclusion upon which I will not now say a word. But the second part of the Resolution refers to the manner in which this money is to be raised and applied, and perhaps, in referring to this second part, I may touch incidentally on the other Resolution, which has not yet been adopted in Committee, but which, as the right hon. Gentleman said a few minutes ago, relates to the carrying out by the Executive Government of the details of the first Resolution now before us. It is proposed, with respect to £11,500,000 to be expended in the Dockyards on the construction of a certain number of ships, that that money should be voted in the usual way in

Supply. The other part—£10,000,000—which is to be applied to the construction of ships under private contract, is to be a charge upon the Consolidated Fund, under the Bill to which this Resolution is a prelude. With respect to the £11,500,000, the peculiarity of the plan, so far as I understood the speeches of the noble Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer is this. On the one hand they propose that the money should be voted by Parliament in Supply in the usual way; but they have suggested, and I suppose the Bill will carry this out in detail what I will venture to call a sort of March-and-April arrangement. As matters are at present, if at the end say during the last month (March) of the financial year any moneys are left unexpended under a particular Vote, it must be paid back to the Exchequer; while, on the other hand, if there is likely to be an excess in the year's expenditure on contracts—I am not speaking of great contracts for ships, but stores, and so on—if the contracts are executed more quickly than was anticipated when the Vote was taken, then, unless moneys can be provided from savings on other Votes, the expenditure must be postponed to the first month (April) of the next financial year. Now, I understand, the Government propose by a clause in the Bill to obviate the necessity of these two inconveniences in March and April, though we do not quite know the manner. It will have to be jealously scrutinized; for it may involve our being drawn into entirely altering the rule under which public payments are made. Formerly the Votes of Parliament expressly provided for the particular sums which were wanted for the service of the financial year; but many years ago the wording was altered, and the Votes are now for the amounts coming in course of payment during the financial year. It is now proposed in some way or other, to go back to the old system, and if we adopt it in respect of the money paid by the Admiralty for ships and stores in the Dockyards, it will form a precedent, and the House may be asked to go back in respect of the other services to the system deliberately abandoned by Parliament on a review of the great inconvenience of voting anything but actual cash payments. When we see the Bill we shall know whether this is so or not. We were urged by the First Lord of the Admiralty to make this charge in consequence of the very large sums which have either to be postponed or hastened in March, or just at the close of the year. But he will find in other branches of the Service that this is still more felt, particularly in connection with public buildings. This, however, is a matter of comparative detail. The main objection which I make to the proposal of the Government is as to the manner in which it is proposed to deal with the £10,000,000 to be charged on the Consolidated Fund for ships to be built by contract. What is the proposal of the Government in that respect? They have laid on the Table a Return showing in detail how it is suggested that the contemplated programme should be financially arranged, and if hon. Members will refer to that statement, they will observe that of the £10,000,000 no less than £9,200,000 is to be spent during the next three years, while during the following four years the equal charge spread over the seven years will continue. What would the practical effect of that be? I have said that out of the £10,000,000 £9,200,000 are to be paid in the next three years, and the comparatively small sum of £800,000 is left over for payment in the next four years. I take it that we may estimate the probable duration of the present Parliament, after what we have heard of the intentions of the Government, at somewhere about three years. [Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.] Should the period be shorter it will be all the better for my argument. Taking, then, the whole of the £21,500,000 charge during the course of three years something over £17,000,000 will have been expended upon the ships provided in the new programme, while for the same period the sum which the taxpayer will have to pay will be only about £12,000,000. During the following four years the amount to be spent will be £4,500,000, whereas the amount to be raised by the next Parliament will be £9,500,000. In other words, under this scheme, we, of this Parliament, shall relieve ourselves from raising £5,000,000 out of the money to be spent upon shipbuilding, leaving that sum to be provided for by a future Parliament in addition to the cost of the work actually done during that period. That appears to me to be a very serious proposal which on the face of it must startle those who are accustomed to watch the public expenditure. Is it right that this Parliament should have the satisfaction of spending £17,000,000 of public money while it only charges the Exchequer with £12,000,000, leaving to the succeeding Parliament the spending of £4,500,000, while it will have to extract from the taxpayer £9,500,000? My first grave objection to the proposal of the Government, therefore, is that they are postponing to future years large charges for shipbuilding which will have actually been defrayed. Such a proposal is opposed to the uniform practice of Parliament, at any rate, since the great Reform Bill. Perhaps the House will allow me to say that upon this question, not only has financial authority, properly so called, been absolutely unanimous, but that such an authority as Lord Palmerston, who took a wide and general view of these questions, but was not a strict financial purist, expressed himself in unmistakable terms in 1860 when a large expenditure was proposed to be incurred for fortifications. On the 23rd July, 1860, Lord Palmerston said—

> "To borrow for the expenses of the year would be as spendthrift a proceeding as for an individual to borrow to defray his household expenses."

He added—

> "But Parliament has encouraged individuals to raise money for the permanent improvement of landed property, and what is expedient for an individual cannot be inexpedient for a nation."

This was Lord Palmerston's justification of the fortification tax, and ever since that practice has been established there have been only two occasions upon which loans have been raised, both being cases in which the money was required for works of a permanent nature. The hon. and gallant Admiral opposite would scarcely contend that ships of war came under that category. There, therefore, has never been an occasion when, with respect to ordinary expenditure for the Naval or Military Services the dictum of Lord Palmerston has not been followed. But something happened last year of which I desire to remind the House, and particularly the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Proposals were then made as to which very distinct pledges were given by the right hon. Gentleman. In the first place it was proposed that £2,000,000 should be expended upon the coaling stations abroad. Hitherto the charge in respect of expenditure on these coaling stations under Lord Northbrook's programme had been defrayed out of the annual Estimates; but a departure from this rule was defended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the ground that these were works of a permanent nature, similar to the works constructed by Lord Palmerston, and that greater expedition in their construction was necessary, and on the faith of the assurance given by the right hon. Gentleman, that the proposal then made in respect to this expenditure would not be drawn into a precedent, our opposition to the proposal was withdrawn. But there was another proposal of the Government as part of the same scheme last year, which contemplated the expenditure of £850,000 towards the construction of a Fleet for the Colonies, and it was also proposed that the charge should not be defrayed out of the ordinary Estimates. This departure from the generally accepted principle was defended on the ground that it was part of an arrangement, under which the Colonies were themselves to contribute £125,000 a year for a term of years for the construction and maintenance of the Colonial Fleet, and hat, therefore, this expenditure was really for them, and to be repaid by them; and, of course, not to be governed by the rules affecting shipbuilding for the Imperial Navy proper. I intervened twice in the debate, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the first occasion acknowledged that the view I took of the danger of the proposal was sound. My right hon. Friend assured the House that it would not be treated as a precedent. Subsequently on the 15th of May my right hon. Friend was required to give a distinct and definite pledge, and he said, speaking expressly of Votes for Shipbuilding, "I should very much deplore if this were in any way turned into a precedent. I shall always adhere to the principle that the needs of the year should be met out of the Revenue of the year." In giving that pledge on a just principle of finance the right hon. Gentleman spoke not only for himself personally, but for the Treasury, and he laid down a principle which ought to be scrupulously followed. Having regard to that distinct pledge, how can he, with any consistency, make the present proposal? Such a scheme as this, which proposes to spread over several years charges of no excessive amount actually defrayed in one year, may be correctly described as weak-kneed and flabby finance. It is an attempt to make things for the moment pleasant all round, very different from the course pursued in former years. Upon the last occasion when a large increase of expenditure on the Navy was deemed requisite, the whole increase was thrown on the Estimates of the years in which it was spent. Here are the figures. In 1858-59 the expenditure on the Navy, eliminating the Packet Service, was barely £8,250,000, while in 1860-61 it was £13,300,000, an increase of over £5,000,000, which was boldly placed on the Estimates, though the main portion of that increase was due to a great scheme for increased naval construction. This increased expenditure was met, not as it is at present proposed, by spreading it over a number of years, but by increasing the Income Tax which in those two years was raised from 5d. to 10d., producing between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 additional revenue. We ought to hear from the Government why the rule that was acted on then and always since is to be departed from now. Another consideration which makes this proposal very objectionable is, though of a technical of an important nature. The whole of our recent policy in regard to the voting of money and accounting for it has been to secure more and more strict connection between the two. Take for instance Vote B in the present Estimates. The new form is expressly adopted so that the House may have before it in each year the expenditure on each ship, cash, stores, and incidental charges audited by the Auditor General. How is that consistent with the plan which spreads a large expenditure over a series of years without reference to the particular year in which the expenditure occurs? The two plans are absolutely inconsistent. The advance in the direction of strict business accounting indicated by Vote B I recognize. I think there will be great difficulty in carrying it out; but I recognize it as an earnest of the wish of the Treasury in communication with the Admiralty to make the public accounting more strict than it has been hitherto. But it is impossible to combine this rigid system with one which throws the idea of an annual Estimate and charges entirely to the winds again. The House is aware that, from time to time, we have had to take large Votes of Credit. Formerly, Votes of Credit covered both Army and Navy expenditure, and might be expended in a series of years until exhausted. A Vote on Account for this year, for instance, you might spend this year, or the year after—you must go on spending it until the amount is exhausted, and you might apply it to either military or naval services.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Vote of Credit you mean.

*MR. CHILDERS: Yes, a Vote of Credit. But of late years the whole construction of Votes of Credit has been entirely altered. Votes of Credit now are only taken for the current year, so much for the Army and so much for the Navy. They cannot be used after the financial year, and the last refinement has been that the particular Services for which the Vote of Credit is to be expended must be shown on the Estimate attached to the Vote of Credit; and any departure from this would be the subject of remark. Now, the present proposal is based upon anticipations more than hinted at by Her Majesty's Government as to the possible condition of Europe in times to come. But if in any of the years covered by the present plan this House should be asked for a Vote of Credit, how is it possible that a Vote of Credit strictly limited to a year can be worked in connection with this plan of providing for them the expenditure of ten millions in seven years? The thing is absolutely impossible. The object of a Vote of Credit for the Navy would be, among other things, to expedite contracts or to enable you to make fresh ones. How can you operate upon a Vote of Credit that can only be spent in one year, and make it fit in with charges not necessarily defrayed in one, but in seven years? These, as I have already said, are somewhat technical questions, but it was my duty to refer to them. There is another objection to the plan of the Government. I do not think that, so far as the contract arrangements are concerned, the Admiralty themselves appreciate what the plan is. I listened with great care to the interesting speech of the Secretary to the Admiralty on Monday last. He dealt with a great many topics; but towards the end he said, referring to the specific arrangement proposed to be made in regard to this £10,000,000, that it was a very common thing to make contracts, such as mail contracts, and to enter into engagements with individuals for a term of years, contracting to make money payments out of the Annual Votes of Parliament. He said he saw no difference between that and the present plan; but there is all the difference possible between that practice and what is now proposed. In the case of mail contracts you make arrangements extending over a series of years, but in each you vote the exact sum required, and you provide that it shall be paid out of the Supplies granted by Parliament. The two things are diametrically and absolutely antagonistic. Therefore it is that I say the Secretary to the Treasury—whose ability we all recognize — has not in this respect sufficiently studied the plan of the Government. That, again, is not, perhaps, so important an argument as one or two of the others to which I have alluded; but I now come to what seems to me to be the main objection to this proposal. The main objection to the plan of the Government is, in my judgment, to be found in the unwisdom of stereotyping for five years the shipbuilding ideas of the moment. It was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in the past delays have occurred from changes of policy on the accession of new Governments or in consequence of changes in the Admiralty; but this has not happened in any appreciable degree, and I will give the House the proof of this at least for 30 years. In 1859, when the Government of Lord Palmerston succeeded that of Lord Derby, there was undoubtedly a considerable increase in shipbuilding, but nothing that had been planned by the Government of Lord Derby was to be at all interfered with. Additional ships were to be built, but there was nothing which answered the description of the right hon. Gentleman that there had been delay in the expenditure of money voted by Parliament owing to changes at the Admiralty.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): I did not only mean changes of Government involving new Boards of Admiralty, but changes in the Boards themselves by which new views are introduced.

*Mr. CHILDERS: Yes; I am about to refer to such a change in a few moments. There was no change in policy at the Admiralty between the years 1859 and 1866. In 1866 there was a change of Government, but Mr. Corry made no change in the programme of his Predecessor; he only added to it by building a class of ships commonly called the *Audacious* class of a new type. In 1869 I had the honour to become First Lord of the Admiralty, but we did not postpone for a day the construction of any ship which we found being built; on the contrary, we increased largely the expenditure on ironclad shipbuilding; and we took in hand the new turret ships *Devastation* and *Dreadnought*, which were pronounced by the Royal Commission the type of the future for the Navy; and there was no interference with the plans of our Predecessors. The same thing happened in 1874. In 1878, 1879, and 1880 there had been a great reduction in the charge for battleships effected by the present First Lord of the Treasury. When Lord Northbrook took office in 1880, he carried out strictly in respect to shipbuilding the plan of his Predecessors, with this difference, that he added year by year in 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1884 considerably to the charge; and in 1885 he brought forward the programme of additional shipbuilding known by his name, but without in the least interfering with the ships in course of construction. In 1885 and 1886 the noble Lord opposite did not interfere with the plans of his Predecessor, but only pushed on somewhat more rapidly the construction of the ships which they had proposed. There was only one case in which this rule was departed from, and that was by my right hon. Friend himself. When my right hon. Friend became First Lord of the Admiralty, in 1871, he found, with respect to shipbuilding, a state of things that required extreme care to avoid alarming the country. A great ship had been lost; and that resulted in the appointment of a Royal Commission, over which Lord Dufferin presided, to consider what should be the future type of battle-ships. For this reason, during the first two years of my right hon. Friend's Administration he most wisely held his hand, in order that as to the type of ship to be adopted, the alarm in the public mind should be set at rest. When the Commission had reported the ships under construction were hastened; and with that one exception there was no material departure by a Board of Admiralty from the plans of their Predecessors. But what would have been the effect if they had adopted the proposed five years' rule? The Admiralty in 1867, when Mr. Corry was at its head, came to the conclusion that it was desirable to add a certain number of ironclads to the Navy, and, as I have said, they adopted what was known as the *Audacious* class of ships. At that time almost everybody agreed that the old broadside ship was the best for fighting purposes, and we had very little or no experience of any other kind of ship. Foreign Governments, indeed, for some time afterwards continued to build broadside masted ships. But what did science bring us only two years later? Why, in 1869, the whole system changed, and we introduced unmasted turret ships in place of broadside masted ships. If, therefore, in 1867 we had decided on building 40, 50, or 60 new ships, according to the ideas of that time, if the plan had been adopted in 1867—when there was a considerable addition to the Navy—of stereotyping our ships for five years, the result would have been little short of disastrous. Again, let us take another striking example. Up to the year 1878 the guns of the Navy had been for many years muzzle-loaders; and if in 1878 we had built a large number of ships, those ships would have had muzzle-loading guns, and within four or five years they would have been entirely obsolete. It was only in 1881 that it became perfectly clear from the inquiries of the Ordnance Select Committee that we ought to substitute breechloading for muzzle-loading guns. Ships which carry heavy breechloading guns must be not in detail only but in some of their main principles quite different from those which carry muzzle-loading guns; and we should have gone on building ships for muzzle-loading guns after the unanimous opinion of the experts, of Parliament, and of the country had entirely changed on the subject. I have given these two illustrations as striking ones, which I do not think can be answered. It is not prudent for us to think that we have already got all wisdom—that wisdom will die with us. Progress is constantly being made in these matters, and in my judgment it would not be wise to lay down, as the Government now propose to do, all at once a large number of ships of a particular type, based on the scientific information of the present moment. It would be better to go on from year to year, not altering any individual ship after she has been laid down, but improving each new ship which we build in accordance with the progress of science. We do not know what improvements even two years' science and progress may not produce in these matters. I trust, therefore, that the Government, instead of adhering to a programme which depends on the scientific knowledge of the present day, will see reason to modify it in the sense I have indicated, so as on the one hand to complete each ship according to the knowledge we have when she is commenced, but on the other to commence from year to year new ships with the advantage of the improved knowledge which has been acquired. In one respect I entirely agree with the declared policy of the noble Lord. When you have once taken a ship in hand, do not tinker her. Lay down the number of ships required to be commenced in any given year, and having once laid them down, finish them as rapidly as possible; do not apply little alterations here and little alterations there, which not only cost money, but which lose time, and are in other respects inconvenient to the Service. But this is quite independent of the general principle which I have tried to explain to the House. Let us not imitate the novel Budget arrangements of French and German Governments. It is popular on the Continent to frame these great schemes extending over eight or 10 years, and we know that the folly of that course has been already proved in the case of France. In Germany, too, there is a dislike of annual Budgets. There is no practical difficulty connected with voting the money required from year to year; while there are grave objections, financial, administrative, and political, to altering our time-honoured system of annual Votes in Supply; and to that system I trust the House will adhere. In conclusion, I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out all the words after the word "Navy," to the end of the Resolution, in order to add the words, "but this House sees no reason why provision for the building and arming of ships to be employed in Her Majesty's Service should be made otherwise than in accordance with the constitutional practice hitherto observed, namely, by annual Votes in Committee of Supply,"—(*Mr. Childers,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Resolution."

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord GEORGE HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The right hon. Gentleman has confined his remarks to two points connected with the shipbuilding scheme of Her Majesty's Government. He objects to the method by which it is proposed to raise the £10,000,000, and also to the method by which the money is to be disbursed. The right hon. Gentleman has also raised some general objections as to the inadvisability of stereotyping shipbuilding by laying down a large number of ships of any one particular type at a time. He has pointed out that great changes occur in ships' armaments, and that therefore it is not advisable to mortgage your income for a long period in advance for the construction of any one particular class of ship. With a good many of the right hon. Gentleman's observations the Government entirely agree. The great object of the Admiralty has been to expedite shipbuilding; we maintain, and the right hon. Gentleman agrees, I take it, that whatever number of ships are laid down they should be pushed on and completed as rapidly as possible. I think there is not a dissentient voice to that. We go a little further, and say that if Her Majesty's Government think it advisable to lay down a considerable number of ships, they must adopt a procedure by which the ships may be completed with the greatest possible rapidity. Therefore, it being a paramount object, from an economical point of view, to rapidly complete whatever ships we have in hand, if the House assent to the Government proposals for constructing 70 ships, they must assent to the financial proposals which enable the Admiralty, for the first time in its history, to provide that every ship laid down shall be pushed on and completed with as much rapidity as is consistent with good construction. Therefore, Sir, if the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to give effect to the principle which he has laid down he must allow us to adjust our financial proposals, so as to carry that principle into effect. I wish just to address a few words to the House, as the representative of one of the spending departments. It is the fashion in many parts of the House in reference to the Admiralty and the War Office to assert that they are mere cesspools of maladministration, and to contrast their expenditure with that of private firms. But there is no private firm in the country which is tied and hampered as the War Office and Admiralty are. Not only do these Departments have to give a most minute account, under a series of the most complicated and technical rules, for every single farthing paid out—and I think it necessary, as, of course, economies can only be promoted by the representatives of the spending Departments being forced to account for every item of expenditure; but, in addition to this, over and over again both the War Office and the Admiralty have been hampered in their policy by what may be called the covert actions of the Executive Government, which often proposes to impose limitations upon the Department that are unknown outside. And when the Department, under these conditions, fails to carry out the programme it has in hand, it is then subjected to attacks from the very men who impose the restriction for not properly using the money at its disposal. If, therefore, ships are to be built rapidly, the funds must be provided. Nobody can dispute that. I have before me a Return showing the period occupied by certain ships in construction and completion. The more quickly a ship is built, the nearer its cost approaches the amount of the original Estimate. Now the right hon. Gentleman has contended that Boards of Admiralty are not in the habit of reversing the policy of their predecessors. If it be true that one Board after another has endeavoured to carry on the policy of its predecessor, and ships have been twice the length of time they ought to be on the stocks, and cost much more than they would have done if the construction had been pushed on, is it not evident that the delay and waste has been due to the limitations that have been placed upon the Admiralty by insufficient funds being voted? There can be no escape from that conclusion. I have some figures relating to the last two or three ironclads which were completed before I came into office. The *Agamemnon* took eight years and five months in building, and the increase of the expenditure over the original Estimate was £57,000. The *Ajax* was nine years one month in building, and the increase of expenditure over the original Estimate was £93,000. The *Dreadnought* was eight years five months in building, and the excess over the original Estimate was £224,000. But in this case there was a material alteration in the plan of the vessel. The *Colossus* was six years ten months in building, and the excess expenditure was £90,000. The *Thunderer* was seven years 11 months in building, and the excess expenditure was £70,000. The *Arethusa* and the *Phaeton*, two of the last cruisers laid down before I came into office, took seven years and six months respectively in construction. If the practice of the past is to be adopted, and the ships in the present programme are to be as long in building, the right hon. Gentleman would be right in asserting that the Admiralty are mistaken in laying down so many vessels at the same time, because they would be more or less obsolete by the time they were finished. But the present Admiralty propose to build every single ship as quickly as possible; and if those ships are, in the opinion of naval experts, in advance of any existing ships of their types, either building or afloat, it follows that they must also be in advance of any ships ready for service when they are completed. Of the 70 ships to be laid down, 52 will be taken in hand in the present year; and no one whose has listened to the debates in the House, and who knows the characteristics of the ships, can deny that they are distinctly, in the essentials of speed and armament, superior to anything of their kind built before. The right hon. Gentleman must recollect that the present Board of Admiralty have deliberately stayed their hand in order to obtain sufficient information to justify them in embarking on a large programme. We are to have a large number of ships of a new type, but we did not venture to adopt them until they had been thoroughly tested. The Naval Manœuvres of last year tested the qualities of vessels as they had never before been tested in time of peace; and it is on the basis of this experience that the designs for new ships have been prepared. Now, Sir, when the right hon. Gentleman impresses upon the Government the advisability of having only a few ships in hand at one time, he is simply recommending to the Government a principle which, from the very moment when we came into office, we have kept before us and acted upon. What was the number of ironclads building, or in course of construction, when I came into office? In the year 1884-5 13 ironclads were building; and the Government of that day—the Government of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian—added eight to the 13, so that in 1886-7 there were 21 ironclads building, the types of which were determined, and for the construction of which insufficiency money had been voted. We found this great number of ships in hand, and determined to complete them all before beginning a new programme. We reduced the number of 21 down to four in the present year, and the next year to that there was only one in hand, so that, so far from attempting to stereotype one kind of ship, the present Government have acted in the opposite direction. We have cleared off the ships in hand, and in proportion as they have been completed and more information has been acquired concerning designs, we have entered upon a fresh programme, which we propose to complete in an unprecedently short time. From the business point of view, therefore, if the House approve of the plan for constructing 70 new ships, you must make special financial arrangements for the purpose of completing the ships. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues object, not to the proposal to build 70 ships, but only to the financial procedure which we attach to that proposition; and therefore the House will perhaps allow me to state, from the Admiralty's point of view, what seem to be the great advantages of the course suggested. The question of Ways and Means must be looked at from three stand-points—the constitutional, the administrative, and the taxing. The right hon. Gentleman dealt especially with the two latter. But he was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1885, and he and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian are responsible for the financial arrangements they made then for giving effect to Lord Northbrook's programme. If I contrast the two sets of proposals, it is not for the purpose of making Party capital, but simply to point out that the present Admiralty, with its additional experience, are desirous of avoiding the evils and difficulties of the former practice. Now, from a constitutional point of view, I assume I am right in saying that if this House is to have complete control over its expenditure, then it follows that the most intelligible forms of account must be presented to it. I assume that the great majority of hon. Members will assent to that proposition. In 1885 the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary to the Admiralty proposed to Parliament to spend £3,100,000 in specially providing for the increase of the Navy, and that entailed a large expenditure, including armament, of between four and five millions. The House assented, as it naturally would; but without one single particle of authority, statutory or otherwise, the Government gave the orders to contractors. Then, having done that, the Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavoured to make financial provision for that expenditure, and he proposed to spread that expenditure over five years, and the sums he proposed to meet that expenditure were—first year, £800,000; second year, £800,000; third year, £500,000; fourth year, £500,000; and fifth year, £500,000. The whole of these financial arrangements broke down. The first year the disbursements were £1,600,000; in the second year, £1,344,000; in the third year, £813,000; in the fourth year, £296,000; and in the fifth year, £59,000. Now, my only wish is to point out that the financial arrangements which were made were absolutely insufficient. In the second year that this programme was in force it entailed a much larger expenditure than was anticipated by the Government, and the right hon. Gentleman thereupon proposed to meet the demand by the suspension of the Sinking Fund.

*Mr. CHILDERS: The Government of the day met it out of the Votes.

*Lord G. HAMILTON: Yes; but where did the Ways and Means come from? If the right hon. Gentleman will look at the Budget he will see that they came out of the Sinking Fund. The operation of the Sinking Fund was suspended practically to make provision for that portion of Lord Northbrook's programme which had been wholly under-estimated the previous year; and although, owing to an increase in the revenue, it was not necessary to have recourse to it, that was the constitutional mode adopted by the right hon. Gentleman, who now insists on the strictest adherence to Parliamentary precedents. Yes, Sir; and the result of attempting to put the cost of this extra programme on the ordinary Estimates has been to disorganize Navy finance ever since. No one has suffered more from the impossibility of distinguishing normal from abnormal expenditure, which has existed ever since, than I have myself, because I have over and over again been accused of arbitrarily reducing the naval expenditure, whereas the difference between the Estimates for the several years for which I am responsible is mainly due to the inequality of the disbursement connected with Lord Northbrook's programme. I say we have before us a procedure which is on every ground to be avoided; it is inconsistent in itself, and it is unconstitutional inasmuch as the expenditure was incurred before the sanction of the House was given, and the provision made for it was wholly inadequate. The Government have avoided those difficulties, and by dissociating the abnormal from the ordinary Estimates they have placed clearly before the House what in their judgment is the normal and what the abnormal expenditure. From the administrative and constitutional point of view the arrangement of the Government is far preferable to that of the right hon. Gentleman in 1885. And, again, if we look at it from a technical point of view, it is clear that if these ships are to be built with the necessary rapidity, some such arrangement is obligatory. I know there are many hon. Gentlemen opposite who are such financial pedants that they desire to provide for the expenditure of each year out of the Votes of that year. But you have no alternative if you are to meet a sudden outburst of expenditure in one year but to put on all the taxation required to meet that expenditure, and then take it off again the next year. Such sudden increases of taxation are most detrimental to the trade and commerce of the country; and, therefore, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made a proposal by which he intends to spread that portion of the expenditure over a period of seven years, although the expenditure itself is contracted in a period of five years. The right hon. Member for South Edinburgh objects to that proposal, and likens it to a Vote of Credit; but the Government have not had recourse to a Vote of Credit.

*Mr. CHILDERS: I said that the system could not work side by side with a Vote of Credit if one should be necessary.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: If that does not in the least resemble a Vote of Credit, then why allude to it?

*Mr. CHILDERS: I said if you adopt this plan of voting Supplies for shipbuilding purposes, and it became necessary afterwards to take a Vote of Credit, the two could not run together. I added, I thought the Government should ask every year for the amount that was required.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: The right hon. Gentleman is no doubt very courageous in regard to taxation. But in my Parliamentary experience he acted very differently as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*Mr. CHILDERS: I had to supply suddenly the war needs of the country up to eleven millions, and a Vote of Credit was essential.

*Lord G. HAMILTON: The Government are not going to have recourse to a Vote of Credit. The right hon. Gentleman's observations amounted to this—that the Government ought to have had recourse to a loan.

*Mr. CHILDERS: I said the Government ought not to have recourse to a loan, but that this expenditure should be met out of ordinary taxation.

*Lord GEORGE HAMILTON: Then it comes to this—that the right hon. Gentleman would propose for the purpose of carrying out this programme, to put on an additional tax of three, four, or five millions one year, and take it off the next. That was a proposal which, although it might accord with so-called Parliamentary finance, would meet with the universal reprobation of all business and commercial men. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that there was another objection to the proposal of the Government, and it was that this Parliament would have the spending of the money, and the next Parliament would have the raising of the money. Now surely he cannot seriously advance that objection, because it is exactly what happened in 1885. He and his colleagues rushed into a very large shipbuilding programme and did not provide sufficient funds to carry it through, and the result was that next year there was a large and unexpected increase in the expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby did the best he could, but ultimately resorted to the old expedient and struck out of the Estimates something which was essential to the efficiency of those ships that were building, and the pen was drawn through the ammunition for guns with which they ought to have been provided. Let me illustrate the extreme danger of that proceeding. The particular class of ammunition not supplied was for quick-firing guns. Now, so closely balanced is the supply and demand of certain articles, that if once a deficiency arises it is years before it can be made up, and last autumn, when the Fleet was going through its manœuvres, the one class of ammunition which was deficient was that which the right hon. Member for Derby, or his subordinates by his authority, struck out, and the unfortunate First Lord of the Admiralty was assailed as an incompetent administrator because he did not supply a sufficiency of such ammunition. On page 6 of the Paper before the House, relating to Lord Northbrook's programme, hon. Members will see the number of new vessels then laid down. Independent of the vessels which were put out to contract, the cost was estimated to be £2,084,000; the provision for the commencement of these vessels in 1885-6 was £108,000; the future liability was £1,976,000; and, therefore, only 4 per cent of their cost was provided for. We propose to lay down vessels which will cost in the aggregate £16,100,000, and in the first year to make provision for spending upwards of £4,000,000. Well, that that is a right and sound policy no one can doubt, and that it would save money is indisputable. If it would give a better return and avoid taxation, are the arrangements of the Government to be upset for the sake of mere Parliamentary and financial pedantry? Then, Sir, right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite have a great objection to postponing charges. Have they never postponed charges themselves? There was a Fortification Fund that was raised by Parliament by a Bill and a loan, and later on there was a Localization Bill, for the purposes of which it was necessary to raise funds by a Bill and a loan. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite, however, when they raised certain portions of funds necessary by loan, always shirked it when it came to raising the remainder out of the Estimates, and year after year the Chancellor of the Exchequer refused to put it on the Estimates. From every point of view, except that of Parliamentary pedantry, I claim that the plan of the Government is the right one For the first time the spending Department has been allowed to call in their experts and technical advisers, and we have been able to adopt a plan by which we have calculated the whole cost of the scheme which we have been directed to prepare for the sanction of Parliament. We have placed that scheme in its entirety before Parliament, and the Admiralty have practically entered into a contract with the Treasury. We have said—"Give us this money and we can build the ships and arm them, and we are prepared to abide by our side of the contract." No doubt it is a large recommendation. If we are wrong, we shall be held responsible to Parliament, and Parliament can blame us. But this is the first time that a scheme so calculated and framed has been laid before Parliament, and the first time any arrangement of this kind has been entered into between the Treasury and the Admiralty. I do not take credit for this new businesslike procedure. The credit is due to the fact that there were, at the head of the Treasury, men who have enjoyed experience in connection with the great business and spending Departments. I have always regretted that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) was never associated with a spending Department, because the right hon. Gentleman can hardly realize the difficulties which they have to encounter. I remember when the noble Lord the Member for Paddington left the Government the right hon. Gentleman expressed the highest approval of the course adopted by the noble Lord. It was said that it was a great mistake for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to go into details. But it is just that policy of not going into details which has caused so much waste of money in the past. If the House is prepared, as it was the other day by an overwhelming majority, to give approval to the programme of the Government, for Heaven's sake do not let us dissociate it from a businesslike or practical procedure.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I hope, Sir, that the House will recollect that this is strictly a financial debate. The objections taken by my right hon. Friend the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), in his very comprehensive speech, were entirely financial objections. He has been followed by the First Lord of the Admiralty, who has adduced what he thinks conclusive reasons from other quarters in favour of his general plan. But he has not met, nor attempted to meet, any of the objections of my right hon. Friend upon the finance of this question, and those objections remain down to this moment absolutely without reply. That being the case, I shall not repeat what has been said by my right hon. Friend. I will advert to one or two matters stated by the noble Lord, and I will endeavour to state clearly to the House what are the points upon which issue is now raised. The object and purpose of this debate have been entirely obscured and darkened by the noble Lord, who says that he understands right hon. Gentlemen on this Bench to take no objection to the amount of expenditure now under discussion. I am not aware that right hon. Gentlemen on this Bench have arrived at any collective resolution on that subject. For my own part, I must own that I am not aware of a sufficient justification for this large expenditure. At the same time, I am aware that Her Majesty's Government have means of information and judgment on this subject such as I do not possess, and I do not think proper to take upon myself the responsibility of refusing on a question of confidence, as this necessarily is, a demand made by the responsible advisers of the Crown. I speak only for myself; it is the view I take. I own there is great force in many of the arguments that have been used, and I am not prepared to challenge, as the Leader of the Opposition in this country, a great Party and Parliamentary issue upon a question which, it appears to me, must depend in the main ~~upon~~ the responsibility of the Government, and which I am disposed to that extent to leave in their hands. So much as regards the amount of expenditure; but I entirely agree with the noble Lord that that matter, be it small or great, is in no degree in question at the present time. The question is as to the mode of making provision for that expenditure. What says the noble Lord? He says the object of the plan is to expedite shipbuilding, and he treated the speech of my right hon. Friend as if my right hon. Friend had objected to expedite shipbuilding; but there is no objection taken to the expediting of shipbuilding. On the contrary, we are disposed to agree that whatever ships are laid down should be carried forward with all possible expedition to their completion. That matter has been treated as if it were a matter at issue between us; but upon it, so far as I know, there is no difference of opinion at all. Then the noble Lord also says that his policy has been to place before the House the entire scheme of the Government. Neither to that proposition do I care to take any objection whatever. If the noble Lord has found it his duty to propose the commencement of a plan which is to occupy several years in its execution, I do not object to his endeavouring to obtain the assent of Parliament to the general groundwork of that plan, and to give to that assent all the weight that can be given to it by the proposition of the Government, by full discussion, and by the deliberate assent of Parliament. Now I come to the point which is really at issue between us. It is a question whether the wants of the year ought to be provided by the free judgment of the House of Commons, and provided with reference to the expenditure of the year. The noble Lord says that it is financial and Parliamentary pedantry to hold that the wants of the year ought to be furnished out of the supplies and provisions made for the year. Now, Sir, there it is we join issue with the noble Lord. That is what he denounces as Parliamentary and financial pedantry; and he says that there are a number of these financial and Parliamentary pedants sitting on this side of the House. I hope there are, but I am bound to say we have got on the present occasion a Leader. Our Leader does not sit on this side of the House; he sits on the other side. Our Leader does not sit on the Back Benches of the other side; he sits on the Front Bench. Nay, more, he is the oracle of the Government for financial purposes, and he is the Leader in the doctrines of financial and Parliamentary pedantry. Here are his express words, which have already been quoted to-night. He said—

> "I shall always adhere to the principle that the needs of the year should be met out of the revenues of the year."

These are the words of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and these are the words which the noble Lord who sits by him has endeavoured to destroy. It is a rather awkward thing when one Cabinet Minister has to assail the fundamental doctrines of another. Unfortunately, in the contingencies of political life a necessity of that kind may arise. What I have to suggest is that when an operation of that kind is to be performed it ought to be performed with the utmost delicacy and gentleness. Strong language and antithetical and epigrammatical phrases are not adapted to the occasion, and if it was necessary for the First Lord of the Admiralty thus severely to deal with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he might have been contented with making his arguments and drawing his inferences, but he ought not to have held the right hon. Gentleman up to the world as the father and the leader of financial and Parliamentary pedantry. Financial and Parliamentary pedantry has been the guide of this country and of the Governments of this country in all the best financial times. The man who most of all laid down this doctrine of annual provision for the wants of the year out of the means of the year was the man who raised his own financial reputation to the highest point—namely, Sir Robert Peel—and raised it expressly and implicitly by maintaining that doctrine and by using all his eloquence and influence to induce Parliament to apply it. I will not refer to other periods, further than to say that the noble Lord's doctrine that taxation ought not to be raised to meet the wants of the year is, in my opinion, most dangerous and fatal to what I should call financial morality.

Lord G. HAMILTON: The right hon. Gentleman is labouring under a mistake; perhaps he will allow me to explain. I did not say that the wants of the year should not be met by the revenue of the year, but that financial pedantry was putting on five millions one year and taking them off next year.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am not aware of any case, apart from operations of war, where it has been necessary to put on five millions one year and then possibly take it off the next year. Am I to understand from the interruption of the noble Lord that he has receded a little from his doctrine of financial and Parliamentary pedantry in order to smooth a little the chastisement he has bestowed on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that he is even disposed to give a qualified adhesion to the words which I have quoted from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which satisfy all our extremest exigencies, and even perhaps go a little beyond them—"I shall always adhere"—always—"to the principle that the needs of the year should be met out of the revenues of the year." No, Sir, such cases do not occur in a time of peace, and in the ordinary course of our operations, as having to impose five millions one year and take them off next. It may be quite true that in a great exigency (I do not know whether it was as great as is now supposed to exist, but no doubt the public opinion of the country deemed it a very great exigency), which arose in the years 1859 and 1860, you may say that five millions of taxation were put on. The noble Lord says that Liberal Governments have always flinched from proposing money to meet the expenditure of the year, but I should like to see the noble Lord come and propose an addition of 5d. on the income tax in order to meet the charges he is placing on the country, and then we shall see who is disposed boldly to confront the necessities of the country. In 1859-60 we did propose an income tax of 5d. to meet the wants of the country; and I am bound to say that I believe that imposition of 5d., in the then state of mind of the country, was considered a bold and a right and a wise act on the part of the Government. There was no removal of those five millions in the next year, but, by a great effort and a long course of labour continued through several years, the income tax was gradually reduced from 10d. in 1860 to 5d. or 4d., at which it was left in 1866 when we quitted office. The noble Lord has introduced a good deal of retaliatory matter and of *tu quoque*, which I must point out is one of the most inconvenient and objectionable things on the part of a Government which is justly jealous of the time of Parliament. He is almost compelling us to take up the time of the House, when in this debate, without any relevance to the subject at all, he goes back to what was done by my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), or sanctioned by myself, giving us thereby distinct provocation to go back on the discussion of these subjects and introduce a great number of important topics into the debate, which are much better excluded from it. [*A laugh.*] I do not think hon. Gentlemen opposite will laugh if I say that that is a highly inconvenient practice on the part of a Government which is striving to save public time, if they really wish to save public time, as I am bound for Parliamentary purposes to suppose they do, but as to which I must own in my mind, sometimes, from practices like those of the noble Lord and other practices, I am tempted to entertain very considerable doubts. The noble Lord takes credit for not asking for a Vote of Credit on this occasion. It is not possible for him to ask for a Vote of Credit. If I understand a Vote of Credit, no Vote of Credit can be asked for in respect of expenditure which can be estimated for; but the noble Lord boasts that he has estimated for the whole of this expenditure, and having estimated for it, he must not take credit for not asking for such a Vote, because it is out of his power to do so according to the Parliamentary practice of this country. The point at issue is not expediting shipbuilding, which we regard probably as a good object; but what we conceive to be objectionable, as my right hon. Friend has shown, is the attempt of the noble Lord to withdraw five millions of money from the jurisdiction of Parliament. There are instances where it is right or allowable to proceed not by annual charge, but by loan, and the noble Lord thinks that he has made a point in referring to the case of 1860, when undoubtedly the provision made for the fortifications proposed by Lord Palmerston was made by a loan, and was not defrayed out of the annual Estimates of the country. That is quite true. I will not discuss the case of those fortifications now further than to say that the measure was unquestionably one demanded by the general and keen desire of the country. I hardly know a case where the country was more completely set upon a proposal, although many other things have occurred since. But the noble Lord must make this distinction. The legitimacy of resorting to a loan depends upon a fair consideration of the ability of the country to bear taxation. Where you have a very large increment indeed of your charge, you cannot go the whole length of providing—although the Chancellor of the Exchequer says you can—everything out of the resources of the year. What did we do? We added 5d. to the income tax—4d. in July, 1859, and another penny in February 1860; and, having done that, and having another charge to meet, we did think it was unreasonable to press the country to find every farthing for those fortifications out of the taxes of the year, and we used, therefore, a Supplementary Vote of Credit. Undoubtedly, as has been well said by my right hon. Friend, that was the best and the only course, not only in the judgment of Lord Palmerston but of the country. These fortifications were completely different in principle from an annual provision for our wants. They were in the nature, as was then supposed, of an addition to our permanent security, and the charge was one altogether analogous to one which cast a burden upon the State for the benefit of future generations. What we complain of in the present proposal is the withdrawal of these charges from the control not only of the present, but of a future Parliament. Three years hence, as I conceive, a new Parliament will be chosen. There are those who believe that the inclinations and ideas of that Parliament may be very different indeed from those of the present. But quite apart from speculations of that character, the true contention is that Parliament ought to be free. It is not desirable to bind, more than absolute necessity requires, the hands even of the present Parliament as to future years. The right and power of the Parliament is to judge the wants of the country from year to year, and much of the power and influence of this House, as well as the primary duty and obligation of the House, depends on the maintenance of that principle intact. But I must say it is going very much further indeed when, not satisfied with endeavouring to bind yourselves, you go beyond that, and endeavour to bind, by making charges on the Consolidated Fund, a future Parliament, as to expenditure of which you forbid it to be the judge, and of which our contention is that it ought to be the judge. What right have you to distrust Parliament? When has Parliament refused the reasonable, and even, perhaps, the unreasonable, demands of the Government? If the House of Commons has had a fault, it has been its extreme truthfulness and wonderful liberality, and its readiness to burden the country in deference to the demands of the Government. It is an ungenerous return, and necessarily, therefore, an unwise return, for the confidence so shown by the House of Commons to lay before it a plan by which you not only ask us to bind and forfeit our own discretion for coming years, but by which you likewise determine that a set of gentlemen who are to be elected by the country, we will say so far off as three years hence shall be also bound. If, as you on that side say, these wants exist, we on this side of the House contend that you ought to make provision for them now, out of the revenues of the year. I will not trespass much longer upon the time of the House, but I must just refer to the distinction between the two portions of this plan. The noble Lord wants to get statutory authority for his entire scheme, and he thinks he gets statutory authority under this Resolution and the Bill which will follow upon it. Now, I contend he will not. As I understand the Resolution, not one sixpence can be expended under it. The Bill will authorize the issue of ten millions from the Consolidated Fund, but the other and somewhat larger portion—namely, the 11 millions, which is to depend on Votes, cannot possibly be issued and charged on that Fund. Very well, the noble Lord has to trust the House of Commons for the 10 millions. Why not trust them for the £21,000,000? The noble Lord says he wants statutory authority for the plan, but he would have no statutory authority. You may give utterance to whatever magniloquence you choose, but it is of no force and of no avail whatever. Not one farthing can be spent in virtue of all the fine language that is used by the noble Lord, and our contention is that the House is entitled to this confidence. The House has always shown itself worthy of confidence, and the constitutional and the wise course is to repay the confidence of the House by similar frankness and trustfulness on the part of the Government. They have never been disappointed by the House; the House has never shown a disposition to take a niggardly course in matters affecting the defence of the country; and I think you will recognize the fact as men of business, as men of common sense, and not only as men of sound constitutional principle, that the solid basis of experience and the uniform practice of Parliament are in favour of showing you that you will be wiser in trusting to that solid basis of experience than in endeavouring to introduce new financial methods which savour, perhaps, of foreign finance. Foreign countries have not been so well habituated to regulate their balance from year to year as we have been happily accustomed to do, and it is to be hoped that, in fact, you will decline to depart from what is well known, and what has been well recognised all along, during the whole Parliamentary lifetime of all of us who sit here—certainly during my own Parliamentary lifetime—in making proper provision for the finances of the country. It has been clearly pointed out by my right hon. Friend—and it has not been denied—that £5,000,000 of the money, the expenditure of which is to be ordered by us, but the provision for which is to be made by the new Parliament, is, in fact—call it what you like—a loan. But you ought never to resort to a loan at all until you have exhausted the fair and just resources of annual taxation. When we had the income tax at 10d. in the pound in 1860, we thought we had exhausted those resources, and consequently we called in the aid of a loan; but with the income tax at 6d. in the pound, reduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year and the year before, it is absurd to say that you have exhausted those resources. There is no case for resorting to a loan. But you ought either to have declared that you would not do this, or you ought to make it known to the country that you are borrowing money which you leave to the next Parliament to pay. You, however, take it upon yourselves; you already presume, in defiance of all financial practice, in defiance of the Rules and precedents of this House, to take it out of the power of that Parliament to judge of the propriety of the expenditure which you are going to saddle upon it. We can protest against that altogether, but do not aggravate that offence by endeavouring to conceal it. You have placed this arrangement under a cover. None but the most expert financier, like my hon. Friend, after considerable labour, is able fully to understand the operation of this plan. It is an express departure from the principles of annual Supply to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has pledged himself in terms somewhat extreme; but the character of those terms being so extreme testifies to the profound nature of the convictions under which they were delivered by him, and the resolute determination which, in all circumstances, he should adhere to in giving them effect. This is done with no precedent—with no approach to a precedent. The noble Lord has not gone upon the case quoted by my right hon. Friend. As I have shown, the case of 1860 is no precedent. I leave that part of the speech of my right hon. Friend to produce its effect, in which he referred to stereotyping the judgment of Parliament on matters connected with the building of ships that are in a state of continual flux; but the grounds we have shown are, it appears to me, more than ample to induce the Government to modify, at all events, the method of their proceeding. I have said that you have nothing approaching to a precedent, but you are creating a financial precedent in this plan which is so bad that it contains in itself the seeds of future evil. There is scarcely any conceivable abuse in the finance of a country which may not be covered and justified by some future Government and by some future Chancellor of the Exchequer under the authority of what you are now inviting us to consider, both when that Government and that Chancellor of the Exchequer have no courage to look in the face the necessities of their position, and when they are endeavouring to flinch from the fulfilment of their known obligations and constitutional functions. On these grounds, entirely without reference to any question of the amount of this expenditure, I hope that the method of this provision will be seen by the whole House, to involve as it does constitutional and practical principles of the greatest possible importance; and we call upon the House, at all events within the bounds of moderation and practicability, to adhere to the sound principle which has been denounced by the First Lord, but which has been promulgated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—namely, that the wants of the year should be provided out of the Revenues of the year.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I will do my best to follow the injunctions of the right hon. Gentleman in the warning which he administered to my noble Friend, that whatever we do we should on no account carry the war into the enemy's camp. We are called weak-kneed, and we are to have every conceivable charge of financial incompetency brought against us, but we are not to be allowed to cite against hon. Gentlemen opposite precedents, which show that our proceedings are venial compared with some of the examples they have set us. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has challenged us about fettering the freedom of the House, in providing the funds to pay for the ships put out to contract. The whole of those ships put out to contract are to be laid down at once. I hope that will modify the view taken by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman says he is as much in favour of expediting the shipping as we are. We cannot expedite it more, than by laying down the whole of the ships at once, and putting them out to contract. I could understand the argument of the right hon. Gentleman if we were going to put out half the ships to contract at once, and another half later on, but do right hon. Gentlemen understand that the whole of those ships put out to contract are to be begun at once? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian referred to the propriety of leaving the arrangements for payment to a future Parliament, and said that a future Parliament might be differently composed from this Parliament, and that it might not take the same view as we do. How does that advance his argument? We do not fetter the judgment of a new Parliament with regard to any ships put down in the £10,000,000 programme, because the ships are begun at once. So far as this amount is concerned, therefore, the question resolves itself simply into the question how these ships are to be paid for. The right hon. Gentleman said that a man might have a doubt as to whether this money was necessary for the defence of the country or not, but we have had a vote on the subject. I did not watch the Division List, and I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman voted on the one side or on the other, but we do know how many of his Friends are in favour of this programme, and how many of them are against it. Of course, there is a large neutral body who are at once unwilling to inform thei constituents that they are opposed to this programme and unwilling to vote in its favour; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, as the Leader of the Party, has given the country no indication, even to-night, as to whether he thinks we are right or wrong in proposing this programme. What was the meaning of the argument of the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Childers), to which the Leader of the Opposition just called attention—that the House and the country would mark the extreme importance of waiting for the development of science? How can we wait, as is suggested, for the development of science? There really appears to be some confusion on this point in the right hon. Gentleman's mind. We consider that these ships should be laid down at once, because we want them to be ready to strengthen the defence of this country at the earliest moment. No doubt advantages have accrued and may accrue from delay. Developments of science may secure better ships being built, but what would be the result if, in the interval caused by the delay, war was to break out and find the ships not ready for the defence of the country, but still under the consideration of naval constructors and experts? The noble Lord has pointed out the length of time it takes to get these ships ready with their armaments and ammunition. I admit that there is some novelty in our proposal; but that novelty has been called for by bitter experience. Some change has been rendered necessary by its being proved to demonstration that the past system has been wasteful and extravagant, and has led to ships not being finished in time, and, when finished, being left without their proportion of armaments and ammunition. If it is a novelty it is, we consider, a business-like novelty that the whole expenditure should be ascertained and provided for beforehand. The right hon. Gentleman claims that the freedom of Parliament shall be retained. But what does he mean by that? Does he mean that Parliament shall retain the right of cancelling the contracts? Future Parliaments can hape no discretion as to ships already begnn. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to what took place in 1859-60, when, to meet the panic of the day, the income tax was raised from 5d. to 10d. But the right hon. Gentleman did not refer to a more recent occasion when, in connection with the localization of the forces, a loan of £3,000,000 was raised. Why was that done? Why was that sum not thrown upon the Estimates of the year? I had the honour at the time of being associated with the right hon. Gentleman, and, if I remember rightly, the Estimates were already swollen by the abolition of purchase in the Army. But for all that the total charges of the year were not so heavy that the expenditure on localization might not easily have been provided for by votes. But there was on that occasion none of this staunch adhesion to the principle which the right hon. Gentleman now regards as so important. The barracks which were then to be built were not regarded as coming within the term "needs of the year." They were treated as an abnormal addition to expenditure, and therefore it was not thought necessary that their cost should be defrayed out of the Revenue of the year. I think, therefore, I may say that our proposal is not unprecedented and irregular. On the contrary, it follows precedent, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that before initiating this proposal I looked carefully at what had been done in regard to the localization of the forces as a fairly analogous case to this. What we are about to do is to make up the arrears of past years. We have to make an exceptional effort to bring the armaments and ammunition to that state which we consider to be necessary, and I might add that the guns which will be constructed out of this expenditure may in some degree be regarded under present circumstances as being almost as permanent in their nature as the fortifications of Lord Palmerston. The right hon. and learned Gentleman and also the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh have referred to words which fell from me last Session to the effect that I considered that the needs of the year ought to be met out of the income of the year. The right hon. Gentleman triumphs and revels in that assertion of mine. But I am sure that, notwithstanding the right hon. Gentleman's observation, it must be clear to every Member of the House that what I meant was not that the entire expenditure of every year ought to be met out of the ordinary Estimates, but that whatever was fairly chargeable for the necessities of the year ought to be so met. It would be a preposterous suggestion that whatever is spent in any given year must always be paid for in that year. Why, in the event of war, the words I used might with equal fairness be quoted as showing that I considered that the extraordinary expenses of a war in any year ought to be met out of the Revenue of that year. Everything depends on this—is the programme for which the money is required an ordinary programme? If it is, it ought to be met out of the ordinary Revenue of the year. If it is an abnormal programme—an effort to make up for the arrears of the past and anticipate the needs of the future—it is ridiculous to say that the expenditure ought not to be spread over a number of years. There are some persons, I know, who consider that this expenditure ought to be met by a loan, but we have not resorted to that method. If we have done anything that can in any sense be so described, all I can say is that it is the shortest loan ever raised for so great an effort. By our proposal the whole of it will be repaid by the end of seven years—it will therefore fall practically on the present taxpayers. I cannot, therefore, by any means assent to the description of our proposal as flabby and weak-kneed. It would, I think, have been better, perhaps, if this debate had been deferred until the Bill was in the hands of hon. Members and right hon. Gentlemen. They could then have seen how careful we have been in so framing it as to retain the control of Parliament, so that no part of the funds shall be diverted in any degree from the particular purpose to which Parliament has destined them. I venture to say, whatever the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, whose great authority I entirely acknowledge, may be, that this is a business-like arrangement which will save money to the taxpayer, without introducing any new principle or any sort of financial laxity.

*Mr. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): This is an important question, and too important to be disposed of with only a brief debate, and I hope that not only Members on this side, but that many Members on the opposite side of the House, will support this Amendment, and for this reason—namely, that hon. Gentlemen opposite claim to be the Constitutional Party in this country; and now they are practically, by the method in which they are supporting this Vote, setting at defiance all Constitutional practice which has hitherto governed this country. Now, Sir, we have heard of Esau selling his birthright. I am not here to defend Esau for selling his birthright, but, at least, this can be said in his favour—that he sold his own birthright, although he thereby deprived his children of their inheritance. But, Mr. Speaker, we are, on this occasion, not only selling our own birthright, but we are selling that which we have no right to sell; we are selling the birthright of our constituents, because we are parting with their right of voting money for public expenditure year by year, and of apportioning that money in the way in which it is to be spent. We have no right, Sir, to anticipate the vote of our constituencies, and I venture to say that every Member of this House who votes for this measure, and thus ties the hands of Parliament in future Sessions, will, when he seeks re-election, be visited with the judgment of his constituents. Now, Sir, it seems to me that we are taking a very extraordinary course with regard to this enormous Vote of £21,500,000. It has been pointed out over and over again that, under existing conditions, the Shipbuilding Vote would be increased if it could be shown to be absolutely necessary, and if it could be proved that it was prudent in the interests of the country. On such occasions the House has never withheld its hand when money has been wanted for the Navy, but in this particular case the Government, by its reckless dealing with finances, is endeavouring to anticipate what the future Votes of this House will be, and what the future decisions of the constituencies may be with regard to shipbuilding. Talk about laying down ships; why, we are tying the hands of our successors, and, more than that, the new vessels have never yet been sanctioned by the experts of this country. On all sides experts disagree as to the style of ships to be built; as to the armour to be placed on them, and, to a considerable extent, as to the armament to be supplied. But, Sir we have to-night heard from the First Lord of the Admiralty one very tangible reason why this Vote should not be agreed to. He has told the House to-night of a number of ships lying idle, already built, but waiting for their guns, and yet, at the same time, he is asking this House for £21,500,000 for the purpose of laying down new ships, and for completing those ships, when guns are not to be found for those already built. I shall protest against this Vote so long as the measure is before the House, and until it has finally passed into law; and I shall do this for one reason, and that is the utter unreliability of the statements of the noble

Lord with regard to the requirements of the Navy. We have reminded him over and over again of his statements made in this House, to the effect that there is practically no need for any extensive expenditure upon it. Yet now we are told that there is an absolute need; and, more than that, the need is so great that we must vote the money in this particular Session as quickly as we can, and tie the hands of not only future Sessions, but possibly of a future Parliament. Now, the noble Lord has challenged the statements with regard to what he said on previous occasions; and he has very recently referred to it as though it were ancient history. But what is the case? In the first place, Mr. Speaker, the noble Lord himself, over and over again in 1886, 1887, and 1888, spoke with regard to the actual condition of the Navy, and said it was equal to almost any purpose. I can refer the noble Lord to a speech he made in this House, in answer to the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone, so recently as March, 1888, in which he went into details with regard to the condition of the Navies in France, in Italy, and in Russia; and he compared the condition of the Navies of those countries with the condition of the Navy of this country. He said, practically, that we were ahead of those three nations combined, and he gave facts and figures in support of that statement. Yet, within 12 months of saying that, we are told that the Navy is in such a deplorable condition that it is not only necessary to spend £21,500,000 on it, but that it is absolutely necessary we should, in an unconstitutional manner, tie the hands of this and a future Parliament, in order to obtain a Vote of this money. And, Sir, there is another question—the question of responsibility. Now, we are to have our hands tied by this Act of Parliament with regard to the expenditure of this money, yet it is not yet settled by the Admiralty who is to take the responsibility for these vast engines of war, upon which three quarters of a million—and perhaps a million—will be spent. The Reports of Committees of this House show that the responsibility of the Admiralty is fixed upon no particular person or persons in regard to the expenditure for the equipment of the Navy, or with regard to anything else having reference to the Admiralty. On the contrary, the Committees of the House have agreed that the Admiralty itself, under existing circumstances, ought not to be trusted with these large sums of money to spend until it is reformed. Yet the noble Lord referred to these figures a day or two ago, in order to show the absolute necessity for this Vote. I say now, as I said at the time, that these figures were absolutely valueless. The noble Lord should have told us the exact state in which these ships were at the time they were drawn out; he should have shown what had to be completed and what had been completed. As it was, it was merely trailing a red herring across the path of the debate. And then, with regard to the noble Lord's declaration in this House, that there was no reduction of expenditure, that struck me as one of the most curious instances of forgetfulness I have ever heard in my life. If he himself refers to the statements which he made in this House in 1887 and 1888, he will find that he boasted of a reduction, and he ventured to assure this House, not merely in his speech, but also in his printed statement which was circulated to Members, that the then position of the Navy was such as to enable the reduction to be made not only at that particular time, but also at future periods. He has not corrected that statement as he has done many others in subsequent speeches, but even in his statement last year he referred to the statement he had made twelve months previously as a crowning piece of administrative reform; and he referred to the splendid condition of the Navy and the great improvements which had been effected. Now there is a turn in the tide of affairs. I should like to ask what has caused this change which has come over the spirit of the dream? Why, it seems to me, it is not far to seek. The noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone, and the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington, and a few other Members, have been calling attention to the dilapidated state of the Navy, and the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty seems to have come to the conclusion that he was likely to lose the support of some of his friends, unless he took steps at once to strengthen the Navy. Now, many of us on this side of the House would be prepared to strengthen the Navy, provided always, firstly, that it was done in a Constitutional way, and so that there should be no wrench of the Constitutional practices of this House; secondly, that it should be done economically; and, thirdly, that the administration of the Navy should be put on such a footing that we should have confidence in the spending Department. Hitherto, we have been spending enormously the country's money without getting any real substantial return. We have been adding year after year to the Navy; we have been spending enormous sums, not only with regard to the general equipment of the Navy, but on the Shipbuilding Vote. During the last 21 or 22 years we have expended as much as seventy-one millions, yet we are now told that the Navy is in such a dilapidated condition that it is impossible for it to protect our commerce and to save the food of the people in case of war, unless this extraordinary expenditure of twenty-one and a-half millions is agreed to. Now, Mr. Speaker, I altogether call into question the position taken up by the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone and others, as to the absolute necessity of having this great expenditure for the purpose of protecting our Navy. I say that our commerce and our Mercantile Marine is capable of protecting itself, and would be able to protect itself even without the assistance of our men-of-war.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! I must remind the hon. Gentleman that the question before the House is the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh.

*Mr. HOWELL: I will not pursue that question, Sir. I think I have stated the reasons why I strongly object to this Vote, and I support the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh, because I feel that it is an unconstitutional proceeding to tie the hand of this Parliament, and possibly of a successive Parliament, in regard to the expenditure of the public money; and I further object because it takes out of the hands of the constituencies the power of calling to account the Administrators of the day for the way in which they spend money on the Navy.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): I want to protest against the breaking down of the great principle which I consider our forefathers struck such a heavy blow in favour of in the seventeenth century—namely, the right of Parliament to vote every year's expenditure. And now, if the House will be kind enough to listen to me for a minute or two—and I will not keep it longer—I desire to say that I felt I could not give a silent vote on this occasion. I support the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh on the distinct ground that the proposal of the Government is giving up the right of Parliament to control the expenditure of this country, and I think it is introducing a most unconstitutional and dangerous precedent. I am, therefore, going to give my vote in favour of the Amendment.

The House divided:—Ayes 158; Noes 125.—(Division List, No. 63.)

Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

*Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): It might, perhaps, be more convenient, under many circumstances, to postpone the remarks I have to make upon this question until the Second Reading of the Bill; but I feel so strongly upon the matter, that I think it my duty to seize the first opportunity I can to address the House, and, so far as any remarks of mine are read in the country, to make my views upon the proposed enormous outlay on Her Majesty's Navy known to the country. During all the years I have had the honour of a seat in this House I have never known a question involved in so much fog as that now before the House. I listened with some interest to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman); but, whilst I admired his speech, and the energy with which it was delivered, it was not until near the end, if even then, that I was able to understand on which side of the fence he was going to climb down. There are three questions practically before us. Are we to spend this £21,500,000; next, how are we to raise the money; and next, on what class of ships are we to spend the money, if it is to be spent? I shall not trouble the House very long with comments on the two latter questions; but, with regard to the first, I desire to make a few remarks. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech—the one from which I hoped to get some light—was a kind of "Rule Britannia" speech—a speech we have heard over and over again in this House. He told us that, if Europe is to be at peace, England must be strong. He did not tell us how England is to be strong. It seems to me we have other ways of being strong than adding largely to our fighting force. There is the moral influence which, I trust, England possesses which gives us a force amongst the nations of the world, and which, in my opinion, is a better possession than even the ownership of large fleets and armies. The Chancellor of the Exchequer sat down without telling us that which we all wanted to know—who are we going to fight; for what are we making these preparations? If the Government desires to have the confidence and support of the House of Commons in financial matters they must be plain and open with the House. The first effects I found of the announcement of the Government that they propose to indulge in this large expenditure were paragraphs in the papers that other Governments were also proposing large expenditure to meet it, that we were entering once more into what was called by a right hon. Gentleman who sat for many years in this House a mad race of bloated armaments. I should not have risen to take part in this debate if I had not felt it to be my duty to protest against the needless panic and sudden alarm which seems to be worked up by the newspapers, and by members of the Services as to our not being sufficiently protected. We are going to spend our substance most unwisely, most needlessly, and I would almost say recklessly, and I am afraid that when we do this we get actually very little for our money. These round figures take us by surprise. So many millions sterling are to be spent in private yards, and so many in Government Dockyards. I have seen something of shipbuilding, but whenever I have seen a tender go out the figures are actually reduced to fractions. I think when the Admiralty are going to lay down these ships all at once that they ought to come to us with specifications much more carefully drawn and Estimates upon which we may rely. If we take the figures, they are very much more simple than they appear. The proposal of the Admiralty is to make the expenditure on the Estimates for 1888-9 a foundation, to ask this year £600,000 more for the Estimates, and to add to that sum a proportion of the 10 millions—£1,400,000. As I understand it, these 10 millions are in addition to the ordinary annual Estimates; and these 10 millions will be spent in a few years, comparatively—and the payment spread over seven years—bringing up naval expenditure to 15 millions sterling per annum. Now, contrast this with the expenditure of a few years ago. In the years 1870 to 1873 — when naval expenditure had become a good deal higher than it once was—and in years of prosperity, too—when we could afford almost anything, naval expenditure very little exceeded, from year to year, 10 millions sterling; now we have got it up to 15 millions. In 1873 the naval expenditure was £9,500,000; but, by the present proposal, we are going to spend over the next four or five years 25 millions more! This is the ratio of increase in a comparatively few years, and I should like to ask—How far are we prepared to go? What has been the course of expenditure on the two Services since 1873? In 1873 the two Services reached a total of 23 millions. In 1880 the sum increased to 25 millions; in 1886 to £29,700,000; in 1888 to £30,400,000; and this year to 31 millions, with a special Estimate raising it to 32½ millions. The expenditure has gone up from 23 millions in 1873 to 32 millions at the present time, and that, too, as an hon. Friend reminds me, and as I know from experience, when shipbuilding is at least 30 per cent cheaper than it was 10 or 15 years ago. What has been doing in the Army all this time while the Estimates have been thus increasing? We have had the Regular Army, the Militia, the Volunteers, the Yeomanry increased from 519,000 in 1873 to the present total of 622,000. A hundred thousand more men than we had a few years ago and in a time of perfect peace! We have raised the Naval Forces from 70,000 to 90,000. Our normal Army and Navy expenditure has crept up from 23 millions to 30 millions, and our Army and Navy from 590,000 to 712,000 men. Whilst we have had this enormous increase in the annual Estimates, we have had a large number of special Votes I have not taken into consideration. The Abyssinian Expedition special Vote cost £185,000. The Ashantee War cost £927,000. The Russo-Turkish War involved us in an expenditure of 3½ millions—the South African Wars £5,300,000. The Afghan War cost 3 millions, irrespective of the expenditure borne by India. The Egyptian War cost £3,895,000, and the Gordon Relief Expedition £300,000. The localization of the forces cost us £592,000 and the Indian Army pensions £450,000. Then we have about 10 millions more added to the expenditure I have alluded to for naval and military operations, 1886, and we end with £10,000,000 for the Navy. When we look at the list of wars and things in which this country has been engaged, can any man get up and say there were more than one or two of them justifiable under any circumstances whatever? Then we have had Lord Wolseley, who is said to be our only great General, advocating conscription straight off. He was contradicted, I know, by the Commander-in-Chief a few days afterwards, but Lord Wolseley laid down the necessity and advantage of that which I believe is utterly distasteful to every Englishman—enforced service in the Army and Navy. Many years ago a wise man said there were three daughters of the horse leech ever crying "Give, give," and it seems to me the insatiable spirit has passed into these Services. We are told the great principle on which we should proceed is to make our Navy equal to the Navies of any other two nations; but the Secretary to the Admiralty and the First Lord have made clear statements to the country to show that we already have a Navy up to that standard. How far are we to run this principle of making our Navy equal to the Navies of any other two Powers? If France is going to spend two millions on her Navy and Russia two millions, are we immediately to spend four millions, or, if they spend four millions each, is our expenditure at once to rise by eight millions? Where is this mad race in expenditure to cease? Is there to be no limit in the principle laid down? Show me your foreign policy that makes this increased expenditure on our armaments necessary? I believe if we had done many things that you have done we should have been accused of trailing the flag of England in the dust, and all that sort of thing. What, I ask, is the foreign policy that requires, all this expenditure? Is it France, is it Russia, is it Germany, that gives you all this anxiety? It cannot be America, because we are on perfectly good terms with the Republic, and the transactions in relation to the Alabama arbitration of recent years have put us on a better footing with them than ever we were before. In reference to the principle laid down for the strength of our Fleet, I may ask, have we ever engaged in a Continental war without an Ally? Hardly, I think, and certainly not of late years. At Waterloo the Prussians came to our assistance, and in the Crimean War we had, in addition to our Turkish Allies, France and Sardinia by our side. Are we going to quarrel with Germany about the Samoan Question? I am glad to see from the evening papers that the German Emperor is coming on a visit to this country; the friendly relations we have always had with Germany ought to sedulously be maintained. I further learn that His Majesty has expressed a desire while in England to see a review of the British Fleet at Spithead. If we are afraid of the intentions of Germany, would we submit our naval strength to the German Emperor's inspection? I do not entertain for a moment the idea of a quarrel with Germany. Do you apprehend danger from France in her present unfortunate position? France has a Consolidated Debt of 970 millions and a Floating Debt of 728 millions. Can any real danger be apprehended from France, with her Debt of 1,600 millions, on which a yearly interest of 54 millions is paid, and with her 24 changes of Government in the course of 19 years? How long could France afford to be at war? It is said that money can always be raised for war. We raised a great deal for our War Debt at 54 per cent, and much has been done by the admirable administration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to redeem it; but I see no apprehension of danger from France. Are we going to spend money to meet imaginary dangers, while every £10 thus taken from the pockets of the taxpayers are £10 taken from the trade and property of the country, and would become reproductive? These ten millions will be absolutely wasted so far as productive industry in the country is concerned, absolutely wasted in the building of ships, and which would otherwise go into the arts and industries of peace, increasing the happiness and prosperity of the country. You employ the money in work that adds nothing to national wealth and prosperity, and such money is wasted unless absolutely required for purposes of safety. I believe there is not a man in this House, on whichever side he sits, but long since came to the conclusion that a good deal of the money spent upon the Navy has been absolutely wasted. The hon. Member for Cardiff (Sir E. J. Reed) says the 17½ millions of money spent on the Navy since 1881 have been wasted, and goes on to say that no single ship can be trusted to perform in war the services for which this money has been spent. If anyone goes down to Chatham he will see ships lying there side by side, and rotting day by day. ["No!"] Well, rusting then. ["No!"] Well, I have seen ships lying there on which heaps of money have been spent, and which have never gone to sea.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I am sure the hon. Gentleman is under an entire mistake. There are no vessels rusting or rotting at Chatham which have not been to sea.

An hon. Member: Portsmouth, then.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Or Portsmouth. There are some old wooden vessels which never went to sea because steel and iron superseded them; but that was 30 years ago.

*Sir J. PEASE: I am speaking, Sir, of what I have seen myself but a few years ago. Well, it seems to me that we ought to be very much more confident than we are of the general strength of our position. We have a very loyal people; there is only one part of the Empire which gives us concern, and I believe, if we were able to govern that country a little more in accordance with the views of its inhabitants, we might strengthen our forces by withdrawing from it all the soldiers and policemen who are there in time of public danger. We have enormous power in our Dockyards, and an enormous Merchant Fleet which, in time of war, could be used for bringing in provisions or for any other purpose. I believe there is on both sides of the House a great and firm desire to keep the peace in Europe. No doubt we have had several of our newspapers raising a cry of alarm recently about our want of strength, but those things have been disposed of in speeches made by right hon. Gentlemen in this House time after time. I want to know from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir J. Fergusson) what has been done in the Foreign Office? Has the Foreign Secretary asked the Governments with whom we are on friendly terms to agree on some plan whereby the present insane rivalry may be averted? Sir Robert Peel, who was a man whose opinions were respected on all sides of the House, said a great many years ago that it is of no advantage for one Power greatly to increase its Army and Navy, as other Powers will follow the example, and the consequence must be that no increase of relative will accrue to any one Power, but there must be universal consumption of the resources in every country in military preparations. He said also it was the true interest of Europe to come to some accord, so as to enable every country to reduce its military armaments, which belong to a state of war rather than to a state of peace. Now, Sir, I ask, has not the time come when our Foreign Office may take this question and bring it before the Powers of Europe? We have all of us seen, in private life, when neighbours are disputing on various matters, and when both seem very anxious to go to law, and both are consulting their solicitors and taking counsel's opinion, if some neighbour stepped in and suggested a better way of settling their difficulties than fighting them out, both are perfectly willing to avoid that which they saw would only cost them terrible annoyance and expense. As with men, so, I believe, with nations. If we attempted such a course as I have described, we should find that there was a readiness on the part of the European Governments and countries who, like ourselves, hesitate about the constant expenditure upon armaments in times of profound peace, to adopt some plan whereby the expenditure might be avoided. The hon. Member for the Leigh Division of Lancashire the other night spoke of a clause which is in the Treaty of Paris relative to arbitration. Surely that clause has already been in use amongst the nations of Europe, and will be in use again in case of any emergency. I may differ from many hon. Members in the light in which I view war, but I feel sure that we have some common ground on which we stand. Everyone, I believe, and especially those who have seen the most of war, will readily admit that it is a gigantic evil, that it ought to be avoided if possible, that everything that war produces is opposed to every lesson of the moral law, and to the spirit and letter of the religion we profess. This being so, surely this House ought to hesitate in an expenditure, the tendency of which must be for war, and which might, at least, be postponed until we are assured by the Government that every means have been tried of bringing about a better state of things. I ask the House to hesitate. Whilst we push forward we can never produce the result which we desire. Precept as to pulling up in this mad race of armaments will never bear fruit until it is accompanied by example. I am sorry ever to put the House to the trouble of a Division, but I feel on this occasion I should only discharge my duty in endeavouring to negative the Motion.

*MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I am in favour of an efficient and sufficient Navy. The reason why I oppose the proposition of the Government is simply that they have not advanced any reasons whatever for the expenditure they ask us to embark upon. I am the more confident in making this statement now, because only an hour ago my Leader, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) said precisely the same thing in different words, adding that the Front Opposition Bench had not expressed a collective opinion upon it. I confess I heard that statement with some surprise after the events of Monday night. When, as Teller with the hon. Member for Haggerston (Mr. Cremer), I saw right hon. Gentleman after right hon. Gentleman and hon. Gentleman after hon. Gentleman who occupy seats on the Front Opposition Bench pass me on their way out from the Government Lobby, I confess I drew the inference, and I think the country drew the inference, that our Front Opposition Bench had formed a collective opinion on this question of expenditure, and that by casting their votes for the Government on that occasion they had in the most effective way expressed that opinion. It appears now that in the course they took on Monday night our leaders were not acting in pursuance of a common plan arranged by those who ordinarily act together, but were merely expressing their own personal opinion, and I am sure they will be indebted to us for the opportunity we shall presently afford them of reconsidering their position. I revert now to a question I raised on Monday night, but which owing to the rather unfair treatment I received from Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, did not receive the attention to which I think it was entitled. It is obvious that the strength of your Navy depends entirely upon the duties it will be called upon to perform, and upon the conditions under which in the event of war that war will be carried on. On Monday I called attention to a paragraph in the report of the Admirals respecting the Naval Manœuvres, a paragraph in which they distinctly suggested that in case of a maritime war we should repudiate the Declaration of Paris. I regard that as a discreditable and also as an impolitic statement. I pass by for the moment the great breach of public faith which is involved, and I fasten upon the impolicy of that proposal. I believe the Declaration of Paris to be founded, not less on reason and humanity, than upon the best interests of this country. The House is no doubt aware that one of the greatest nations on the globe, the United States of America, declined to accede to the Declaration of Paris, but why, because it abolishes the right of privateering, and it is obvious that to a country which has not a large established Navy that right is one which ought not to be hastily or rashly abandoned, but the United States has said over and over again that it is quite willing to abandon that right, on condition that private property is exempted from capture in war. I think this is an excellent occasion to impress on the Government the great duty of doing what they can, not to threaten to repudiate the Declaration of Paris, but to extend its operations, and I ask them in conclusion to approach other powers with a view to the revision of the Declaration of Paris, in the direction of exempting private property from capture by belligerents.

Mr. HANDEL COSSHAM (Bristol, E.): During the short time I have had experience of this House I have come to the conclusion that there are two classes of men whose opinions in matters of expenditure we should not take too much account of—namely, those who occupy official and ex-official positions, and the admirals and colonels who have a very large interest in the plunder derived from the expenditure. Official life seems to change the best of men; and, believing, as I do, that we have on the front Opposition Bench some of the best men in the country, I can only account for their deterioration by the fact of their having held office. I not only protest against this expenditure itself, but I protest against our being asked to vote it without any attempt on the part of the Government to justify it. It would be an entire abdication of our functions as Members of Parliament if we were to lavishly vote the money of the people blindly and without any justification being shown by the Government. It used to be the proud boast of this House that it was the only assembly in the country that had control of the public purse; but I feel that if this proposition be passed in the shape in which it is proposed, the House will have abdicated to a very large extent the functions on which it has hitherto insisted. If the words which have been put into the mouth of Her Gracious Majesty in the past have any meaning, there can be no justification for this expenditure. I also strongly object to this proposal because I have no faith in the men who are to spend the money. Every investigation we have into matters relating to the Admiralty seems to me to prove that those who administer the Admiralty are the most incompetent and the most wasteful portion of the community. My constituents have sent me here to protect the national purse, and it seems to me that to trust a body of this character with this large sum would be against every possible fact which has been brought before us. I do not often agree with the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) but I do agree with him in his statement that the Admiralty are the most incompetent and extravagant body with which the country has had to deal. My experience of the past is that the more money we spend the more we have to spend, because before any long period has elapsed Ministers come down to the House, tell us that the money has been spent wrongly, and that we must provide more. I venture to say that five years after this money has been granted we shall have Gentlemen getting up from both Front Benches and declaring that the money has been absolutely wasted, and that we must vote £20,000,000 more. Then, I ask, if this expenditure is necessary now, why was it not necessary a few years ago? There is no change in the circumstances, so far as I can understand. We were told two years ago by the noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) that not only was the expense in the Navy sufficient, but that there would be a reduction. We shall now have to pay at least 25 per cent more for this money then if we had obtained it two years ago, and I contend, therefore, that the Government have been very lax in not putting the proposition before us on a previous occasion. Again, it seems to me that the fashion of ships is always changing, and I think we ought to hesitate before spending £21,000,000 on ships which many of the experts declare to be of bad design. The fashions of ships change like the fashions of clothes, and a man is not more justified in spending a large sum in ships which may be wanted years hence than he is in buying a large stock of clothes which will not be wanted until the fashions have probably changed. So far as I can make out, the proposal is that we should spend about £2,000,000 a year more on the Navy than we have spent in the past. I confess I can see no justification for such an extraordinary proposal. There is a great deal of mystery about the whole thing, and I say, if the proposed increase in our Navy is necessary, let us pay as we go. The fact is, that whenever the Tories are in office it means more expenditure and more taxation.

An hon. Member: Does it?

Mr. H. COSSHAM: Yes, it does; and the whole history of the country shows it, the general result being that when they have spent the money they leave it as a legacy for posterity to pay. One of the greatest burdens we labour under to-day was put upon us by a past Tory Government—a burden almost sufficient to crush the life-blood out of the people. Depend upon it, the day is coming when the expenditure of this country and the burdens we put upon the people will become more than they will submit to. That expenditure is growing enormously, and, if this sort of thing continues, the question must force itself to the front—"Who is to pay it?" Will not the enfranchised democracy demand that commerce and industry alone shall not be called on to pay the cost, but that real property shall be made to bear a much larger share of the country's expenditure than it has had to bear in the past?

An hon. MEMBER: Question, question!

MR. H. COSSHAM: That is the question. I say the question will be whether this increased expenditure will not compel real property to bear its fair share of the burden. The question before us at this moment is whether we shall spend an additional twenty-one millions on our Navy, and I say that this will force to the front the question of who will have to pay—who shall be called on to bear the burden? The country will not consent to bear it as it has hitherto done, and a much larger share will, as I have said, be put on real property. If, instead of lending itself to the principle which leads to the creation of the most ships and the largest army, the country will only adopt the principle of trying to get other nations to settle their differences by arbitration, the glory will be ours and the greatest benefits will accrue to the human race. In conclusion I have only to say that I shall vote against the expenditure now proposed by Her Majesty's Government, and I think they would have been well advised if, instead of asking for a further extension ofour Navy, they had endeavoured to prune down our Dockyard expenditure, and thus to save from the extravagant outlay on that Department the money that may be required for any reasonable addition to our Fleet.

MR. EVANS (Southampton): I desire to put before the House a question which must deeply affect the expenditure upon our Navy, and which has not yet been alluded to by those who have taken part in the debate. In doing this I shall have to quote the remarks that have been made on prior occasions by one or two of the Members of this House. In the *Times* of the 9th of March there is a letter from the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) in which the noble Lord said—

> "For the purposes of effectually strengthening the Navy there is again universal agreement as to the absolute necessity for precise information as to the duties which the Navy ought to be expected to perform in the event of war with one or other of the European Powers."

That is as to the duties the Navy may be expected to perform in time of war. Then, again, in the *Times* of the same date, there is a letter from the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford), who says—

> "I then made it perfectly clear that the 74 ships I asked for were necessary for defence of our commerce and to insure the delivery of our food supply and raw material in case of a war with France alone, if we are to adopt the only right principle—viz., 'to watch, and, if possible, destroy every warship of an enemy.'"

And, beyond this, there is the First Lord of the Admiralty, who is reported in *Hansard* as having said—

> "We are the carriers of the sea-borne products of the world, and it is utterly impossible to suppose that we should be able to protect our main trade routes."

To what do these remaks all point, unless it is that the Admiralty are not able to define the duties the Navy will be expected to perform, but that they are setting aside a certain amount of naval power for the protection of the maritime commerce of the country. I propose to show that all the expenditure which is made in that direction is useless, and can be of no avail in any circumstances whatever. I am second to no man in my desire to have a thoroughly effective Navy, but I cannot go with the hon. Baronet who has cited Cobden with a view of showing that peace can be maintained without such aids; and, as he has called in Cobden as a witness, I will call him in too, and remind the House that he once said—"If you want to have peace in England you must have the supremacy of the sea." I am unfortunately familiar with the terrible devastations of war. I know what war means and what it would mean to this country, and I may add that the county I live in would be one of the first to suffer in case of a European conflagration. It will, therefore, be understood that if I say anything against the Vote, I am quite alive to the great risk incurred if any mistake is made. The First Lord of the Admiralty has said we are the carriers of about seven-elevenths of the produce of the world, and the First Lord is about right. What would be the effect of war upon this maritime commerce? There are two occasions which may be taken to form our judgment on this point — the American War, and the scare about Russia three years ago. When war intervenes, it does so by creating a war premium, which has to be paid on what is carried. You have the capital invested in the ships and the capital invested in the cargo, and every charge that has to be made in order to keep a ship going must be sustained by the cargo. When, therefore, war takes place, the cargoes have to pay a war premium. Well, what does that premium amount to? Before the American Civil War of 1860 the Mersey was full of American clippers. The Americans were our great competitors in the North Atlantic carrying trade; in fact, they had rather the better of it. The first premium that was paid as a war premium was only 5s.; but when the Alabama and Shenandoah came out the premium advanced until it reached as high as £40. It does not require any great amount of intelligence to know that such a premium as that absolutely killed the Mercantile Marine of America. Of course it might have been possible to have resuscitated it; but the reason why it was not was this: the enormous cost of the civil war made it necessary to raise an enormous amount of taxation. The Americans taxed everything, including steam engines and iron; and the result was that as we were at that time passing very rapidly into the steam system of carrying, no American could build a steamer at anything like the price that we could, so that it became impossible for America to compete with us in the carrying trade of the world. Then the navigation laws of America prevented the Americans from buying ships in foreign countries and sailing them under the American flag, and the result was that we were left as carriers of the main commerce of the world. Having alluded to the effect of the increased premium of insurance, I now come to the scare as to a war with Russia. Although that was only the faintest suspicion of a scare, it resulted in a premium of 15s. per cent. on our main trade routes. Now let us take the case of a great war. So great is our superiority in regard to our Mercantile Marine, not only in speed and efficiency, but also in numbers, that I should think between 80 and 90 per cent of the fast steaming vessels of the world belong to this country. In the case of a small war the Mercantile Marine of England would be the masters; but the effect of a great war—and it is in contemplation of the possibility of a great war that this expenditure is to be incurred—would be to destroy the whole of the Mercantile Marine of this country. When the First Lord of the Admiralty tells me it is utterly impossible to suppose that the whole commerce of the world is coming to an end through the action of 20 or 30 cruisers, I will tell the First Lord of the Admiralty he does not know what he is speaking about. When the merchants of England find it impossible to bring their goods under the flag of England owing to the extra war premiums, the cruisers the Admiralty are going to build will wander along the main trade routes, the sole carriers of the English flag. It is said the British people possess such pluck they will face that state of things; but it is not a question of pluck; it is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. It is a great pity that, with regard to our one line of defence on which we ought to be unanimous, we have no confidence in the administration of the Admiralty. There is no sacrifice which any man who has once seen a war would not make to stop the invader from putting his foot on our shores. What is the policy of the Admiralty? They are going to build 70 ships all at once. If a manager of any of our great companies were to say, as the First Lord of the Admiralty has said, he proposes to lay down at once a fleet of 70 vessels, he would not long remain in the position of manager. The policy of the great companies is to put down just as few vessels as is necessary, and then watch for improvements. No more suicidal policy can be devised than to lay down 70 vessels on a fixed plan, which the improvements of the next few years might render obsolete. I am sorry I have such a lack of confidence in the administration of the Admiralty that I feel constrained to vote against the Resolution.

SIR W. LAWSON: I desire to thank my hon. Friend who has just spoken for the contribution he has made to this debate, and I may add that a great many of those who sit on this side of the House were glad to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that, in his opinion, the large sum asked for by the Government is not necessary. This is encouraging, and we are further encouraged by the Division we have taken on the constitutional question. Hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House present themselves in two different aspects on this question. They are like the Attorney General, who appears in two characters. They say one thing in one character and another thing in another. When they are addressing the people on public platforms outside this House they represent one state of things, and when they come here they represent another. I was lately looking at what was once written by the great statesman we have just lost—Mr. John Bright. He was writing about the Liberal Government of the day, and he said —

> "The Government has fallen prostrate before men whose whole idea seems to be to add indefinitely to Army and Navy expenditure—every million added increases the power to demand more, and lessens the power of the people to resist. I fear we are, as indeed all Europe seems to be, hastening to some great catastrophe from which, in our blindness, there is no escape; and we are helpless to resist or complain, because the Ministers who consent to the growing madness are our friends. If our opponents were in office, the Liberal Party would be asked to avert or to lessen the evil; as it is, we are blindly led, and we blindly follow."

Now, our opponents are in office, and I hope—I would like to believe—that they will take a different course in future. The late Prime Minister said to-night that this expenditure was not called for; yet I see these hon. Gentlemen have been voting for it. I think it was a Vote of Confidence in Her Majesty's Government, because the noble Lord when he brought in his scheme said distinctly, and very properly, that it was introduced on the responsibility of the Government, and the Government alone. And he explained their policy—namely, an expenditure on the Navy and naval armaments of £21,500,000. Now, I object altogether to that policy. If you are to consider what forces there are in the world available to attack you, then there is no limit to the expenditure which you will be required to incur against every possible contingency which may occur. That seems to me a senseless policy — it takes into consideration nothing of the circumstances of the time. It makes no estimate of possibilities; it ignores the negotiations which you may make to avoid quarrels; it shows you have no trust whatever in those Ambassadors whom you maintain at very great expense throughout the whole world; it is certainly a Vote of Want of Confidence in the whole diplomatic body. I said I would not keep you to-night long. The noble Lord (Lord G. Hamilton) said the other night, "I have heard it all before," and I told him that he would hear it again, and he will hear it again both in this House and in the country, until either he or some of his colleagues give us some sort of reason for this most extraordinary proposition now before the country. Mr. O'Connell used to say that he went on repeating the same sort of thing over and over again until the echo of his words came back from the lips of his opponents. I have heard a great many echoes in my lifetime, and perhaps I may hear one from the noble Lord before he has done. I ask him again, because he has given no sort of answer, against whom are you arming? The noble Lord sits dumb, mute, inglorious upon that Bench. If you do not tell the country against whom you are making these preparations, no one will believe you when you say it is for the defence of the country. They will believe it is for something else. I believe you have got the idea into your heads on that side of the House, and some on this side, that it is a very popular thing to go up and down the country crying, "We are all for a strong Navy;" but I say you cannot separate the Army from the Navy, for both are parts of the preparations for war. If you have a strong Navy, you release your soldiers to go about committing raids, annexations, and robberies in every quarter of the globe. I consider that preparation is the first step to war. But now I am very glad to be able to quote what war is. I read in an article written by the noble Lord (Lord Charles Beresford) a few words of Lord Brougham, in which the noble Lord said he entirely coincided—

> "I do abominate war as un-Christian. I believe it to be the greatest of human crimes. I believe it to include all others—violence, blood, rapine, fraud."

But what does our only General, Lord Wolseley, say in his "Soldier's Pocket Book"?—

> "We will keep hammering away at the counsel that honesty is the best policy, and that truth always wins in the long run. These pretty little sentences do well for the child's copybook; but the man who acts upon them in war had better sheathe his sword for ever."

Do you think that you need prepare for war after you have heard that from your only General? Who has got up this scare? That is one thing which puzzles me very much; ever since this measure was introduced I have been puzzled over that. I have lived through a great many scares that have had some shade of foundation or other — either French Generals swaggering across the water, or Russians taking possession of rocks and sand somewhere, and which nobody wanted, or the great armies of the Continent becoming dangerous. Because these great armies are fighting one another, then that is the very time they will fall upon us. A more extraordinary idea I never heard of. I have come to the conclusion that the whole thing has been got up by the London newspapers. Everybody knows that the London newspapers are always wrong. I remember reading the incident of Diogenes who, when his town was preparing for war, rolled his tub up and down the streets, and, when asked the reason, he said, "Why, everybody is busy; I ought to do something." The noble Lord (Lord George Hamilton) is the modern Diogenes, clamouring, shrieking, and hallooing up and down the country, making a great stir, and making speeches "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." It is the greatest puzzle to me how this case has been got up. Perhaps someone on the other side will enlighten me. At any rate, we are out-voted to-night. I hope, however, the front Opposition Bench will keep in the good way. I will do my best to keep an eye upon them, for I think the country will watch which way they go to-night, especially after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian. But whatever they do or say, I am happy to think there is a certain number of Radicals left in this House who on every occasion, by their voice and their vote, will oppose this most mischievous scheme, one of the most odious which the classes have devised for the robbery of the masses.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.): I think the House is to be congratulated on the altered tone of this debate. I am sure before to-night the character of the discussion was one altogether unworthy of the House of Commons. The question was as to the expediency of spending £21,500,000 in a lump sum for the extension of the Navy, and the debate fell into a wrangle between experts as to how the money was to be expended if the House were willing to grant it. It seemed to me at that stage that the question was whether the money should be spent at all or not. Now, Sir, it is a very singular thing, so far as I know, that not one Member north of the Trent, not a single Member from the districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, who are very largely interested in the foreign commerce of this country, and in keeping uninterrupted the routes of our trade, has risen in his place to say one word in favour of the proposal of the Government for this increased expenditure. [An hon. Member: Palmer.] The hon. Member (Sir. C. M. Palmer) can not be included; his case is isolated; he is a builder of war-ships himself; and as soon as he has concluded his contract for Spain he will be able to take up contracts for the First Lord of the Admiralty. You have the singular phenomenon in this debate that the men who are interested in our commerce, which is supposed to be in danger, have not taken part in it. Mr. Speaker, it cannot be denied that this is a very serious proposal, though it is true that the figure of £21,000,000 has been put in an exaggerated form. I am entitled to speak, as a Member who has unfortunately had to withstand previous scares in which money has been spent in a lavish, senseless manner, as we are about to do in the present case. Besides, I am personally interested for the supply of a large industry with which I am connected in the safety of our Mercantile Marine, as are other representatives of various districts in the North. Therefore, what is advanced by those connected with the North of England may be considered as worthy of some attention by Her Majesty's Government. There are, I think, three grave objections to this proposal. The noble Lord (Lord Randolph Churchill), when these figures were announced, said he believed they would create the greatest possible alarm abroad. To let it go forth to the world that we are going to spend £21,000,000 is a piece of bluster; what could be more childish than to present such a view of such a scheme to the civilized world? But I believe the time is most inopportune for such a declaration on our part. There is no doubt whatever that the state of Europe is one which cannot fail to cause anxiety to every reflective mind. I believe, with our departed Friend Mr. John Bright, that a catastrophe is before us. The Minister for War, addressing his constituents not long ago, said there was a war cloud hanging over Europe, and that it might burst at any moment. I think there is a great deal to be said for that view of the right hon. Gentleman, and I have come to the conclusion that it is simply impossible for the civilized nations of Europe to keep up their expenditure upon armaments indefinitely. The time must be fast approaching when it will be found that the taxpayers of any one of the Continental States have no longer patience to bear these increasing burdens. The state of tension is such that the slightest accident may cause a conflagration all over Europe. Well, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that is the very reason why we are proposing to increase the Navy. I venture to differ altogether from a policy of that kind. The hon. Member for Oldham the other night asked what was the reason for this increase of the Navy. I say it is a reflection upon the House of Commons that any Government can come down and ask for an endorsement of their policy, involving, in the first place, an enormous increase of expenditure, and, in the second place, a change of policy towards foreign nations. If the money is to be put into ships which in a few years will be obsolete and worthless and not battle-worthy, I regard that as the greatest possible calamity. But the noble and gallant Lord (Lord Charles Beresford) advocated a Navy strong enough for any two nations combined in Europe; and he says if they intended to go to war, they would turn to see what England intended to do. Now, that is the very danger we incur by this increase in the Navy; we encourage this warlike spirit. The noble Lord, referring to some words in the Speech from the Throne, said there was an increasing expenditure upon armaments in Europe. There has been an expenditure going on for many years, but the noble Lord stated that it could not be said that there had been an abnormal increase in the expenditure of Continental States upon their Navies. There has been no sudden outburst of expenditure on the part of Russia or France which would involve to this country any danger. Reference has been made to the speeches of my hon. Friends who are *par excellence* the representatives of the working classes in this House. These eight or ten gentlemen, who can answer for the sentiments of working men in this House, are apparently not disposed to vote in favour of the proposed expenditure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer observed that the representatives of working men should, at all events, be anxious to protect the freedom of our imports and exports. I quite agree with that; at the same time we are not convinced that there is any new or serious danger menacing us, and which should lead us into increase of expenditure. That really is the policy of Her Majesty's Government upon which this proposal is based. I complain that on questions of this kind the House of Commons is not taken into the confidence of the Government. We are entitled to criticize their policy, as representatives of the people; we are not living under a despotism; we are not called upon to accept blindfold any policy from any Cabinet Minister, whether of a Liberal or Conservative Government, or, like the present Government, of a composite character. The noble Lord has told us that it will take 3 or4 years, possibly 5, before the ships can really be ready for sea, with their armour. Does anybody believe that the present state of things in Europe will continue five years without some modification? I believe that the change cannot be postponed two years. There have been extraordinary efforts made in France to have a peaceable year in 1889, so that the great Paris Exhibition might not be spoiled; but I think, Mr. Speaker, that Her Majesty's Government and the House of Commons may safely conclude that the struggle cannot be postponed for four or five years, unless there be a change of policy on the Continent of Europe. I think we have a right to ask what our Foreign Office has been doing for years. What is the use of this secret diplomacy of ours which we maintain at such enormous annual expense? I know Her Majesty's Government may reply that "we are comparatively powerless" to bring about the conditions of anything approaching peace. We do not expect that. It was no reflection upon Her Majesty's Government, when war broke out in 1870 between France and Germany, that we were unable to bring about an undertanding between those two countries; and it may be that we are now unable to ward off the approaching catastrophe. But that does not lessen our responsibility to do all that lies in our power to make an attempt in that direction. If our Foreign Office is worth anything, it ought to show that an attempt has been made in this direction. Reference has been made by the hon. Member for South Durham tó Sir Robert Peel's opinion that an appeal should be made to the Continent of Europe. It would be one of the noblest tasks the Government could undertake to try to assuage this war feeling in Europe and bring about a better state of things. But if we compromise ourselves by increasing our Navy and our Army, we simply allow ourselves to be drawn into the stream of extravagance and folly which we are condemning in all other States of Europe. My own opinion is that Her Majesty's Government would have acted wisely and truly in the interests of the country if they had not attempted any expenditure, but had made the gravest declaration in the face of Europe and the civilized world that in any coming struggle we should observe absolute neutrality. We should declare that there is no justification for an appeal to arms, and that we would take no part in the fray. I have no doubt many hon. Members regard the suggestion I am making as cowardly. Now, Mr. Speaker, why should we pride ourselves on our insular position unless we are prepared to declare that our relations are not those of the Continental States? Our interests lie largely outside Europe. Of course we have interests in Europe. But on humanitarian grounds we wish to see good fellowship prevailing between Continental States, and it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government to do everything they can to remove any difficulties that prevail. Have the Government ever asked themselves, in case there came a war on the Continent, is Great Britain going to be one of the principals in the war? Now, I submit that it is impossible we can take up such a position, as our responsibilities ought to be limited to our powers. And I say we have no power to cope with Continental countries in their huge armaments, neither can we throw on the Continent without an immense effort a single Army Corps, much less two or three. But, if we cannot interfere as principals in the struggle, are we prepared to take a subordinate position and to have our policy dictated by Continental States? I do not believe that the people of this country would listen to any such suggestion for one moment, and therefore, if we cannot be principals in the struggle, and if it be too humiliating to us to be subordinates, there is only one course open to us, and that is to keep ourselves entirely aloof from the fray. In doing that, I think we have a duty to perform towards Europe, and that is to declare that we have no intention to interfere by force of arms in any struggle that may take place on the Continent. And, if that is so, my belief is that there is no serious danger to this country whatever. Now, Mr. Speaker, if I may be allowed a moment or two longer, I would ask where does the danger lie? France is generally pointed to, because it has a large Navy, as being a source of danger to this country. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, France has her hands full; she is burdened, as we have already heard, with a prodigious National Debt, and also with an extraordinary expenditure for the maintenance of her armaments; while the relationships between France, Germany, and Italy, are such that, if France is contemplating a struggle of any kind, it is not against this country, but the object of her struggle will be the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine. If there is no real danger from France, where, then, does the danger come from? If the Government are not candid enough to tell the House against whom they are arming and against whom their policy is directed, we must try to find out for ourselves. Sir, I do not desire that a single word shall fall from me which will have the slightest tendency to increase and embitter the feelings which prevail on the Continent; and if I refer to the state of the Continent, it is only to express an opinion —which no doubt the people of this country feel—an opinion of regret that there is such a feeling of alienation and estrangement spreading itself throughout Europe. There is another source of danger, no doubt, in the action of Russia. Now, Sir, I am old enough to remember not only the outbreak of the Crimean War, but also the discussions which preceded that outbreak. This country was so foolish at that time as to make itself a principal in the struggle with Russia. We saved Austria, Germany, and Italy from their share of the responsibility in keeping back Russia in what was supposed to be an aggressive policy. But I believe that I am speaking the mind of the great majority of the people when I say that, if there should be further aggression on the part of Russia, it must, in the first place, rest with Germany, Austria, and Italy to withstand that aggression, although this country may have something to say, in the long run, upon the matter. We hope that the bulwark against Russian aggression will prove to be the growing forces of the Balkan States. In conclusion, I can only say, if diplomatists find themselves impotent, if Her Majesty's Government finds itself unable to do anything in the present emergency to turn the tide of this war feeling, let the House of Commons and the British House of Parliament speak to the peoples on the Continent, Parliament to Parliament and people to people. I have only one object in view, and that is to save my country from the folly and mistake which, as I believe, the country may be led into by the increase of the Navy, and by the policy which may come out of it. And I desire, further, to induce, if possible, by all the means in my power, the Government to make proposals which may lead Continental States from this ever-increasing expenditure; and if we fail in this attempt, at any rate we shall have done that which will redound to the honour of Her Majesty's Ministers and of the British House of Commons.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have listened for two hours to speeches, which are only reiterations of protests previously made, and against which the House has already decided by a large majority. There never was a Government that was more anxious than this Government to do what it can to preserve the peace of Europe, and that was less disposed to embark upon any policy of aggression. As this is the fourth night upon which there has been debate upon this preliminary Resolution—although the nights have not been wholly given up to debate—I think the time has arrived when a decision should be taken, and I therefore move that the question be now put.

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes 200; Noes 136.—(Div. List, No. 64.)

Question put accordingly, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

The House divided:—Ayes 215; Noes 128.—(Div. List, No. 65.)

NAVAL DEFENCES.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize (b) the creation of a Naval Defence Account, to which moneys issued for the aforesaid purposes may be carried, and the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, and the temporary borrowing, on the security of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums which may be required to meet excess of expenditure in any financial year.

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorize (c) the adoption of provisions to carry the above objects into effect.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

[BILL 170.] COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 6.

***Mr. BARTLEY** (Islington, N.): I should like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is quite clear from this clause that there is no possibility of increasing the nominal value of the Debt? The previous clause says the Debt is not to be increased. If it is impossible to raise the amount necessary at par, there may be a temporary increase, and I should like to understand whether, under no circumstances, will that be the case?

***The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER** (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): No, Sir; the Debt will not be nominally increased under any circumstances.

Clause added to Bill.

Clause 10.

***Mr. BARTLEY**: I should like to ask, supposing the consent of the person is not given, what will be the result of this clause?

***Mr. GOSCHEN**: In that case the amount will be paid off.

Clause added to Bill.

Bill reported, without Amendment.

Read third time, and passed.

SUPPLY—REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Resolutions [28th March] reported.

(1.) "That a sum, not exceeding £1,785,516, (including an additional sum of £49,900), be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Salaries and Working Expenses of the Post Office Telegraph Service."

CIVIL SERVICES.

Class I.

(2.) "That a sum, not exceeding £78,395, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

Resolutions agreed to.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (TONNAGE) BILL.—[Bill 162.]

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I think the House ought to know something about this Bill before it is read a second time. We have not had a single word from any responsible person to explain its provisions, and unless we have some explanation I think we should be entitled to move the adjournment of the debate. I have no desire to proceed to extreme measures, but I have a strong objection to the exceedingly vicious practice of rushing Bills through the House without explanation.

***The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE** (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): If I did not explain the proposals of the Bill, it was because, the matter being of a technical nature, I have circulated a memorandum with the Bill fully explaining its provisions. I will, however, shortly inform the House what the proposals of the measure are. Under the Merchant Shipping Act, vessels are charged for dock, light, and harbour dues upon their net tonnage. In calculating the net tonnage from the gross tonnage, certain deductions are made for light and air spaces and crew space. The law, under what is known as the *Isabella* decision, is in a state that Parliament never intended it to be in; and the result is that, in calculating the net tonnage, deductions are made for spaces which have never been included in the measurement of the gross tonnage. I think it is obvious that the law ought not to be allowed to continue in such a state, for it is not only unfair to the light dues and to the dock companies, but also obviously unfair as between ships of one class and another. The Bill before the House, therefore, proposes to restore the law to the condition which it was the intention of Parliament to create by taking the measure of the gross tonnage inclusive of everything, and calculating the net tonnage from that.

Sir J. CORRY (Armagh, Mid): As I was one of a large deputation to the President of the Board of Trade on this matter, I may say that I do not intend to oppose the Bill, but in Committee I shall move an Amendment for the omission of the clause which provides that the measure shall be retrospective.

Mr. J. C. STEVENSON (South Shields): I heartily hope that the Government will stand by this Bill, which will be of advantage to harbour authorities all over the country. In some cases the deductions that are made are of a very serious character, and enable vessels to enjoy all the advantages of harbour accommodation at a much less rate than in former years.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I wish to testify that two ports in Ireland in which I feel a particular interest—namely, Dublin and Belfast—have suffered a great and growing injury to their incomes by reason of the condition of the law which this Bill is intended to amend. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Sir M. Hicks Beach) has accurately stated that the object of this Bill is not to create a novelty in legislation, but to give effect to the intention of Parliament in former times. The hon. Baronet the Member for Armagh (Sir J. Corry) has stated that in Committee he will move an Amendment to prevent the Bill having retrospective action. If the measure is to be made effectual, it must have retrospective action; it would be worthless without it. The effect of carrying such an Amendment would be to introduce a double law, and one set of ships would be measured under a different law to another. That would be an indefensible anomaly, and would occasion great damage to the various parts of the Kingdom.

Sir H. DAVEY (Stockton): I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade (Sir M. Hicks Beach) on having brought in this Bill, which will have the effect of redressing a very gross injustice which the harbour authorities are at present labouring under. I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken that if the measure is to have its full effect it ought to be retrospective, because, undoubtedly, great anomalies will be introduced if there are to be two classes of measurement—one for ships measured before the Bill comes into effect, and one for those measured afterwards. The object of the measure is one which will, I think, commend itself to the sense of the House. There is no doubt that the decision in the *Isabella* case has not commended itself to the minds of commercial men or of lawyers, and I think the Government is to be congratulated upon having brought in a measure of such a beneficial character. I hope they will not allow its benefits to be lessened by accepting an Amendment which will have the effect of making it merely prospective.

Mr. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): I think it is right I should say that the population of Liverpool, who are largely interested in the Bill, generally approve of it. At the same time, there is very great force in what was observed by the hon. Member for Armagh. There is no doubt that if the Bill is made retrospective it will have a very serious effect upon vessels which have been built under the old *régime*. Owners of vessels who built their vessels under the old regulations will suffer great loss if they are made amenable to legislation of a retrospective character. I am sure I represent the views of shipowners when I say they approve of the provisions of the Bill, but they do think it would be very unfair if the provisions were applied to old vessels. I hope the President of the Board of Trade will reconsider the question before the Bill proceeds upon the present stage.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Greenock): I cordially endorse the observations made by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Whitley). Great injustice will be done to a large number of shipowners whose vessels have been built and worked in conformity with the existing law, if the operation of the Bill is made retrospective. There is another point worthy of consideration. The House must be aware that there is a very large and increasing competition between English vessels and foreign vessels, or vessels sailing under foreign flags. To these vessels you cannot apply the proposed law, and therefore, if the Bill is made retrospective in its operation, the conditions under which foreign vessels sail in competition with us will be more advantageous than those under which our vessels trade.

*Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): Let me respectfully suggest to my hon. Friends that the question of the retrospective action of the measure will be best dealt with in Committee. What we desire now is the Second Reading of the Bill, in order that it may go to Committee, and then be dealt with on its merits. But one single fact, perhaps, may be worth a bushel of arguments. I hold in my hand a Return of several ships which have come into the River Tees. One of these vessels, a steamer, carried to sea 600 tons of pig iron. The vessel's gross registered tonnage was 587 tons. Under the old measurement she was 323 tons, under new measure 252 tons, and, therefore, she had 600 tons of pig iron on board, and yet she only paid port dues on 252. If this Bill is not passed it is perfect beggary to some of our harbours. I hope, therefore, the House will, without hesitation, agree to the Second Reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT (1877) AMENDMENT (LEASEHOLDERS) (No. 2) BILL.—[Bill 23.]

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

HORSEFLESH (SALE FOR FOOD) BILL.—[Bill 49.]

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): The taking this Bill to-night is altogether unexpected. We are now approaching the most serious part of the Bill, and I really think some time should be given for consideration. With that view I beg to move that the Chairman do Report progress.

Motion made, "That the Chairman do report Progress."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

*Mr. KNOWLES: I hope the hon. Member will not think it necessary to press that Motion. The Bill is a very simple one and excites a good deal of favourable interest, as was evidenced last Wednesday, when I presented a Petition in its favour signed by 80,000 persons. I hope the hon. Member will allow us to proceed.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I make the Motion out of no hostility to the Bill, but simply because I, in common, I am sure, with many other Members, have no knowledge of it.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I quite sympathize with the hon. Member's motive in making the Motion. I have myself often made protests against rushing legislation in this manner, though I am bound to say the reason does not lie in the same degree against this Bill. I would rather add my appeal to that of the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill, that the Bill may be allowed to proceed. The hour is not late, and we might go on a little further. I have myself some question to raise in relation to Clause 7. I am certainly not anxious to have such heavy penalties imposed without due consideration, and shall be inclined to propose the substitution of £10 for £20.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question has been put that the clause stand part of the Bill.

*MR. KNOWLES: In this respect the Bill is based on the provisions of the "Public Health Act, 1875" and the Margarine Act. I did not think this Bill should be more or less stringent than those Acts, and therefore I inserted the £20 penalty. I hope that that will satisfy the hon. Member.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion and allow this most useful and necessary Bill to go forward.

MR. PICKERSGILL: If there is a general desire to proceed I will not stand in the way.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

*MR. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): Are not the penalties in the Bill illusory after all? Have not the magistrates under the Summary Jurisdiction Act the right, which they usually exercise, to reduce penalties to a nominal amount for a first offence?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): The hon. Member is quite right, and I do not think it is advisable to leave no discretion and say the penalty shall be £10 or £20. We give a maximum, but in ordinary circumstances the magistrate would enforce a penalty under that.

*MR. BRADLAUGH: Is it not well to specify that the penalty shall not be less than a certain amount?

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): Will the Attorney General say if in such cases there is an alternative of so many days' imprisonment in default of fine? Perhaps I ought to know without asking the question?

SIR R. WEBSTER: I am afraid I ought to know, but my recollection of the clauses of the Summary Jurisdiction Act is not sufficient to enable me to answer.

Clause added to the Bill.

Clause 7.

Motion made that this Clause stand part of the Bill.

*MR. CONYBEARE: On this I would like to suggest to the hon. Member in charge of the Bill that there are other kinds of flesh of inferior quality, such as that of dogs and cats, the sale of which, under the guise of wholesome meat, it is desirable to prohibit. I do not suggest that part of a dog or cat could not be mistaken for a joint of beef or mutton, but there is this difficulty, that the provisions of the Bill are directed against the sale of horseflesh, in a form which I might call *in puris naturalibus*—in its simple and raw state as killed. But there is no provision for preventing a butcher or other person from selling horseflesh made up in a different form that would conceal its real character. Has the hon. Gentleman considered if his Bill meets such a case?

*MR. KNOWLES: The object of the Bill is principally to protect poor people who go to low butchers' shops and ask for pounds of meat. They are served with pounds of horseflesh, with pieces of mutton or beef fat skewered on to disguise it. The fat of horseflesh is easily distinguishable from that of beef or mutton; it is the lean of horseflesh that is palmed off upon these poor people. Of course, the hon. Member alludes to horseflesh made up into sausages. I have gone into the question, and I may say that I intend sausages to come within the scope of the Bill. It may interest the hon. Member to know that there is no difficulty in detecting horseflesh in sausages and polonies. In order not to waste time now, I will only refer the hon. Member to an article by Dr. Bell, of the Inland Revenue Department, in the *Chemical News* of January 14, 1887, in which he will find out how horseflesh may be distinguished, and I will tell him that not only the flesh of horses, but also the flesh of mules and of asses, which is included in the Bill, may be recognized anatomically, physically, and chemically.

Clause added to Bill.

Clause 8.

Question proposed that the Clause stand part of the Bill.

*MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I observe that the local authorities here appointed are the Commissioners of Sewers, the Vestries, and the District Boards, and to them the medical officers are to report. Now the County Council is about to appoint a Medical Officer of Health for the whole of London, may I suggest that he may have concurrent power with these other local officers, and that they should perform this function under the supervision of the County Council? I hope the hon. Member will not object to words being inserted to that effect, such words as "under the supervision of the County Council."

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): No one could assent to that. Concurrent authority should always be awarded where it is possible. Concurren authority has the effect of taking away authority from both parties. Unquestionably, in a large town like London authority should be exercised by authorities within a limited area.

*MR. LAWSON: But the officers might act under County Council supervision.

*MR. RITCHIE: No. I think, surely, the Local Authorities may be trusted, and can act better individually within their own area.

Clause added to Bill.

Clause 9.

Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I think the Committee would be glad to hear from the hon. Member who, I must admit, is exceedingly learned on the subject with which his Bill deals, and possibly has a reason for an unusual course. He has said that the object of the Bill is to protect poor people from being imposed upon by being sold horse flesh instead of other food. If horse flesh is, when kept, not so labelled it is to be liable to be seized, But why, by this Clause 9 isthe Bill not to eb extended to Ireland and Scotland? Are not our poor people equally exposed to this imposition, or are we to accept the doctrine of Dr. Barr as the Chief Secretary does, that it is not quality, but quantity of food that is there regarded?

*MR. KNOWLES: I may tell the hon. Member that I have taken great pains to acquire information in regard to England, Scotland, and Ireland; and, so far as that information enables me to judge, there is at present no sale of horseflesh in Scotland or Ireland. I gathered my information from inquiries made at Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Limerick, and Waterford; but, of course, if the hon. Member can show me the slightest reason for extending the Bill to Ireland, I have no objection to its extension.

Mr. SEXTON: I think the hon. Member had better follow the precedent of the Coercion Act, which is intended to be permanent, whether there is crime or not. This Bill is intended to be permanent, and though no horseflesh is sold now, the time may come when it may be.

*Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I hope the hon. Member will agree to accept the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sexton), made, I suppose, with a view to horseflesh finding its way into the Lord Mayor's Banquet at Dublin.

Sir R. WEBSTER: Without agreeing with the correctness of the analogy, the right hon. Gentleman has certainly shown good reason why the Bill should extend to Ireland and Scotland. Though horseflesh is not sold now, it may be hereafter. I hope, therefore, my hon. Friend will not object to the clause being struck out. It will also be desirable, I think, on Report to insert a clause to make it clear that the Bill applies to horseflesh when mixed with other matter or alone. It is quite possible that the contention might be raised that the Bill only applies to horseflesh when sold alone.

*Mr. RITCHIE: If the Bill is made applicable to Scotland and Ireland the clause will have to be amended that deals with the exercise of power by the local authorities. As it now stands it has reference to England only.

Mr. SEXTON: On Report the necessary alteration may be made.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I quite agree that the Bill should apply to Scotland.

Question put. Clause omitted. Clause 10 added to Bill.

New Clause.

Mr. Knowles

This Act shall come into operation on the first day of January one thousand eight hundred and ninety. — (*Mr. Knowles.*)

Clause read a second time and added to Bill.

Bill reported; as amended to be considered upon Monday next.

SMALL DEBTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[Bill 153.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): This Bill passed the Second Reading last Session, but at so late a period that it was found impracticable to get it passed through Committee. Its object is to extend the summary procedure in Scotland for the recovery of small debts from £12 to £25. The Bill had the approval of the Lord Advocate and his predecessor, and I now beg to move the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, that the Bill be read a second time.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): The main object of the Bill I thoroughly approve, but there are certain clauses, however, that are considered as rather dangerously stringent. If my hon. Friend will put off Committee to a tolerably distant date, so that these clauses may be considered, I offer no objection to the Second Reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday, 25th April.

PURCHASE OF LAND (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—[Bill 163.]

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): This Bill was discussed last year and received a large measure of support. Its object is simply to enable to sell a tenant a few acres in addition to the holding itself when that is desired. This a landlord now cannot do, but this Bill will enable him to do it. Among tenants there is anxiety to have the Bill passed; at least I know that is so in Galway, and landlords make no objection to it.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The object of the Bill is, briefly speaking, that which the hon. and gallant Gentleman has stated. It may be necessary to consider some details in Committee, but, on the part of the Government, I offer no opposition to the Second Reading. Of course, I must be understood as not pledging the Government to details, but safeguarded it may prove a useful measure.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read second time, and committed for Thursday next.

LAND LAW (IRELAND) ACT (1887) AMENDMENT (LEASEHOLDERS) BILL.

[BILL 31.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): This Bill was discussed at some length the other night in the absence of the Chief Secretary. It was resisted then mainly on the ground of the absence of the right hon. Gentleman. May I now ask, in moving the Second Reading, if the Government support the Bill or otherwise?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): It is the fact that when the Bill came on unexpectedly on a former occasion I was absent. But though I am now in my place, I am afraid this is not the time to admit of discussion, and certainly we cannot accept the Bill without discussion. I fully recognize the cruel position in which many of the clients of the hon. Gentleman are placed, but I also recognize the almost insuperable difficulty of finding a solution for the difficulties of the case. It may be there is relief to be found by enabling leaseholders to purchase their holdings through the assistance of State loans, paying thus much less in the form of an annuity than they pay in rent, but when I am asked to go beyond that, and modify what are not rents in the ordinary sense of the word, but permanent leases analagous to feus in Scotland and permanent leases in England, we are introduced to a whole set of new problems in regard to which I find myself unable now to offer a satisfactory solution. Under the circumstances, and not desiring to vote against the Bill without discussion, I now move the adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

PUBLIC HOUSES, HOURS OF CLOSING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

[BILL 148.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): The object of the Bill is to restore the Act, passed a couple of years ago, to the same state in which it was when, as a Bill, it left this House. The object is well known to Scotch Members. A large majority voted with us on the previous occasion, and I shall best serve the interest of the Bill by saying no more, but moving the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): The Bill only refers to Scotland; but it is important as being part of the whole

Sunday Closing Question. The Members for Scotland no doubt have excellent memories, and may be perfectly aware of the provisions of the Bill. For myself, I do not recollect them, and I am sure many others are in the same position. It is not time now to enter upon the discussion, and I, therefore, beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Tomlinson,*)—put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time;" and, objection being taken to Further Proceeding, the Debate stood adjourned.

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN PREVENTION BILL.

[BILL 87.] SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill, and I am glad to know that for the Motion I shall have the support of Her Majesty's Government. I am moving in this matter on behalf of a Society started some three or four years ago to prevent cruelty to children in the direction set forth in the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Mundella.*)

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): In assenting to the Second Reading I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that the Committee stage should be postponed for about a fortnight, on the ground that in some respects the measure goes too far, and its provisions will have to be carefully considered. We desire to see an Act passed which will deal with existing evils, and I dare say that if the right hon. Member postpones the Committee stage for some time we shall be able to meet him on some of the points of difficulty in the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read second time, and committed for Thursday 25th April.

POOR IN LARGE TOWNS.

Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question.—[2nd April.]

MR. BARTLEY: Cannot some arrangement be made for taking this adjourned debate? It is a matter of great importance, a great number of Members being interested in it. As yet only four or five private Members have had a chance of speaking on it. It is quite as important a matter as some of those for which days have been fixed.

Debate further adjourned till Thursday next.

MOTION.

—o—

EMIGRATION.

***MR. RITCHIE** rose to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into various Schemes which have been proposed to Her Majesty's Government to facilitate Emigration from the congested districts of the United Kingdom to the British Colonies or elsewhere; to examine into the results of any Schemes which have received practical trial in recent years, and to report generally whether in their opinion it is desirable that further facilities should be given to promote Emigration; and, if so, upon the means by and the conditions under which such Emigration can best be carried out, and the quarters to which it can most advantageously be directed."

DR. TANNER (Cork County, Mid): I object.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square) rose to make an appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw his objection.

DR. TANNER: I object.

The Motion, therefore, was not put.

House adjourned at ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 15.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 13.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 5th April, 1889.

REPRESENTATIVE PEER FOR IRELAND.

Earl of Portarlington's Claim to vote for Representative Peers for Ireland—Ordered and Directed, That a Certificate be sent by the Clerk of the Parliaments to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland, stating that the Lord Chancellor of the United Kingdom has reported to the House of Lords that the right of the Earl of Portarlington to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of him, the said Lord Chancellor; and that the House of Lords has ordered such Report to be sent to the said Clerk of the Crown in Ireland; and it is hereby also Ordered, "That the said Report of the said Lord Chancellor be sent to the Clerk of the Crown in Ireland."

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION (ACTON, &c.) BILL.—(No. 19.)

Read 2ª (according to order).

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 32.)

Read 2ª (according to order), and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

EDUCATION CODE.

*LORD NORTON, in rising to call attention to the Education Code just issued, and to move a Resolution, said: My Lords, the Education Code which has just been issued is a sample of the danger of departmental by-legislation. A subject once handed over to departmental legislation ceases to have much attention or serious consideration from Parliament ever after. If that Code lies unchallenged a few weeks longer on the Table it will become law. There is additional danger in the annual revisions of the Education Code, which lead successive Ministers to signalize their tenure of office by constant changes. I myself first codified the Minutes of Council 40 years ago, since which there have been the Revised Code, the Sandon Code, the Mundella Code, and now this Code, which is more important, as it is based upon, and pretends to adopt, the conclusions from three years' inquiry by a Royal Commission. Such a revision might promise some permanency, but for the now developing local Government, which portends a further and more radical reform. I do not propose discussing the whole Code, but a principle which pervades it, of acknowledged mischief, whichit only proposes partially to correct. That principle is a variable State aid of education instead of a secure provision of its requisite means. The system of precarious support is thus described by one of the highest authorities—

> "A distribution of grants to each school on elaborate and minute conditions contained in ever-changing Minutes of the Department, the fulfilment of which is verified by an annual inspection, on the report of which the amount of support to be given for the past year is announced to the managers, summed up in items, and assessed on individual passes in the examination. On this system the managers of our national schools became contractors with Government for certain scholastic results, and on their delivery of so many passes on a

priced catalogue of subjects, the Treasury has nothing to do but to add up the bill and give a cheque for the amount."

Expende quot libras has become the test of the worth of any Education Code, even among leading men. The Commissioners summarize on this point the evidence of the teachers, the evidence of the managers, and the evidence of the Inspectors. The summary of the teachers' evidence is—

> "That this mode of payment for education limits education to a hard and fast line of instruction has caused neglect of important subjects not comprised in the catalogue of subjects paid for; throws aside dull children of no profit in the account; has substituted an evanescent cram of memory for the permanent development of intelligence; and has led to mechanical methods of teaching calculated merely to win the grants."

The managers' opinion on the subject, although in favour of individual examinations to guide the judgment of the Inspector in his Report, is unanimous against assessing grants upon the detailed results of those examinations, and they use the expression that it has "killed intelligence" in our system of education. As to the Inspectors, they agree that the system leads all concerned to trim their sails to meet the examination, rather than to develop education, and that knowledge so imparted was soon lost. Mr. Matthew Arnold, one of the highest of our Inspectors, attributes the comparatively more intelligent teaching in other countries to the absence of any such system; and he goes so far as to say that the evil is so rooted that there is no escape but by entire change. The Commissioners themselves confess their disappointment from the evidence that though, under the present system, the results of examination might appear satisfactory, the children lost with extraordinary rapidity after leaving school the knowledge which had been so laboriously and expensively imparted. From all these premisses, my Lords, I do think that it is an extraordinary conclusion that the Parliamentary grant should not be wholly, but only partially, freed from such a system of distribution. Two reasons are assigned—one, that its abolition would incur graver evils, which the Commissioners do not describe, and, to me, are inconceivable; the other, that Parliament would not continue so large a grant without satisfying itself that the quality of the education given justified the expenditure. It was the original idea of this payment on results to tempt Parliament to vote money by an apparent *quid pro quo.* Now Parliament requires no tempting, but has become profuse in this expenditure; and, as the results obtained by this mode of payment are proved to be greatly damaged by it, there is no reason for withholding from Parliament the better results and higher quality of education which it might have for its expenditure. For these two worthless reasons the new edition of the Code proposes only to increase the fixed part of the grant from 4s. 6d. to 12s., leaving the rest to be won by hazards as heretofore—a shilling for this and sixpence for that. The most attractive part of our national education will still be a speculation in this lottery. The chief attention, even of managers, will still be devoted to earning the variable income to cover their already incurred expenses. The subjects not paid for—religious instruction, for instance—will still be neglected, dull children will continue valueless, and all the acknowledged evils of the system will infect the whole for the useless retention of a part of it. If asked what is to be done, the answer of the whole world comes to that challenge. We are the only nation which pays for national education in such a way. There is no other nation, there is no Colony of this country which attempts to maintain a system of national education by a precarious offer to managers to win prizes. In the United States the plan is, out of a Common School Fund, to make distribution to the various school districts in the country according to the population and the rateable value of the district. The Report makes a calculation that the present average amount of the prizes won is about £1 per head. Why not take that figure, and make it a normal capitation grant, somewhat more or less according to population and character of locality, so that the managers may know what means they have to put to the best purpose? Of course, that must be done here, as in other countries, on the condition that continued recognition of the school by the Government depends on any defect reported by the Inspectors being as soon as possible corrected. I know there is a fear in some minds that the Inspectors would hardly dare to make strict and true Reports in cases which might involve the dismissal and ruin of teachers; but that fear is proved to be foundationless by experience in our own country. In London and in other of our large towns the School Boards have already found from the evils of the present system that it was better to throw upon the rates the fluctuations of the Parliamentary grant, and to assume for themselves a fixed system for the support of their schools, though it obliges them to have another set of Inspectors by the side of the Government Inspectors. From the Report of their own Inspector upon the general conduct of the school they see to any defects being remedied, even if that has involved the dismissal or the degradation of a teacher. No difficulty whatever is experienced. These Boards will not sacrifice the interests of the school for the sake of incompetent teachers. I want to point out, in the next place, that even the increased fixed grant, which I consider a very great improvement, is spoilt in this Code, by making it on a triple scale of graduation, according to the Inspector's discrimination of the merit of each school. We have not here to form an opinion; we have proof that such graduation of merit is wrong. It has been tried and failed. The plan of attempting to mitigate the evil of payment by results by a merit grant has already failed. The Inspectors, by bad habit, assessed it like the rest on particular results instead of on general conduct, and all confessed that it was impossible to draw the line between the comparative grades of merit fairly and satisfactorily. National School education cannot be a competitive system. If it were, the race would be unfair between a village school in Wiltshire and a town school in Manchester, and the one of hardest work and most needing aid would get the least. This consideration shows the third and last blot I wish to point out in the Code. While it offers a small bonus to ill-defined poor schools, which by-the-bye, it neutralizes by requiring a larger staff, the same curriculum is held out for a rural and a town school; and the assessment of prizes attaches the highest rewards to what is unattainable by the poorer schools. It would be a better plan to invert the scale of prizes, if we are to have prizes at all, and to give the higher prizes to the lower subjects. It would be better if there were higher fees for specific subjects, which are chiefly taught to richer children, and at the same time free exhibitions for poor children able to go to the higher subjects. It is absurd to offer all an equally free education. Free education means that everybody should pay equally, whether they make use of the schools for their children or not. There should be some proportion between the advantage derived from the schools and the money which is paid for them; and, as the richer children who go in for higher subjects have richer employments before them, there can be no injustice in their being required to pay more towards the public aid which they receive, giving poorer children the advantage of exhibitions, and the poorest only exemption from fees. There are many other points in the Code to which attention might be drawn, but I do not wish to trespass further now on your Lordships' time. This Code has been laid some time upon the Table, and in a few weeks will become law. I have only raised one point, but it is a vital one — a point of principle, a point which affects the whole system, and I maintain that unless the system is entirely changed the best use of our enormous expenditure on education cannot be obtained.

Moved to resolve, "That the new Education Code is defective in retaining any variable grants to schools, meeting any report of inefficiency by withdrawing or reducing the means of efficiency, instead of securing adequate means of efficiency and making the correction of any inefficiency a condition of continued recognition; also, in graduating the increased fixed grants on a scale of adjudged merit, similar to that which has just be proved impracticable; also, in continuing to make grants on the same terms and standards to schools of dissimilar circumstances."—(*The Lord Norton.*)

*Viscount CRANBROOK: My noble Friend is always strong in the opinions which he entertains, and having protested alone in the Royal Commission, he now repeats his protest. He is, in fact, an *Athanasius contra mundum* in support of his views. I do not think it will be necessary to discuss the question raised by my noble Friend of payment by results. I am not called upon to defend that system, and I am not, like my noble Friend, going to condemn it, but I feel sure that an attempt to hoodwink Parliament and the country was never thought of by my noble Friend Lord Sherbrooke, who was the author of that system. My noble Friend was not likely to do anything underhand or misleading in any way. I am quite sure my noble Friend was anxious to make education as good as possible in the country, and he tried a great experiment which has not failed to confer great benefits on the country. A system has grown up under which we ascertain fairly well what every child in the schools has learned. If a new system is introduced I am quite sure that the Inspectors would be influenced by the one which preceded it. It might be said with truth of the Commission itself, and the evidence upon which they founded their Report, that the bias was strongly against trusting altogether to individual examination. They were anxious that a much wider view should be taken with regard to the schools of the country, and that the Inspectors should be at liberty, while they did not neglect the child, to look at the condition of the school itself and all the circumstances which surrounded it; that they should test it as far as could be tested, as it used to be to some extent before 1862; and that they should take upon themselves to examine the whole system of a school, and, as far as might be, its moral tone and all conditions connected with it, and upon that base their Report to the Department, which should decide, not merely upon the opinion of the Inspector, but upon the facts he reported. The Commission recommended that the sum of 10s. should be substituted for the 4s. 6d. granted under the present system, and that was to be in their view a fixed grant. But when the Department came to consider that question, we saw that 10s. would not exactly meet the requirements, because it would not leave a sufficient balance for the results of individual examination, and because we felt also that there need be no examinations in Standards I. and II. already given up in Scotland. Now, my noble Friend says that the principle of the Code is competition. But that is not so, inasmuch as, under competition, one person gains a prize of which another is deprived. All schools will obtain the grant who fulfil the conditions, and attain the required standard. The principle, no doubt, will be laid down by the Department of estimating the condition of the various schools, and seeing which of these several grants should be made. Let me refer for a moment to one of the chief ones, the 15s. 6d. grant. There has been a great desire that if drawing should not be made compulsory, every effort, at least, should be made to spread it throughout the country. Therefore, in the larger schools we have made it a condition that to obtain the 15s. 6d. grant drawing should be effectively taught. In other schools, where the numbers are not sufficiently great to afford an efficient staff, though we have not made it a condition, still we desire that drawing should be encouraged in every way; and being under the Science and Art Department, what will be given will be something beyond the 17s. 6d. to which the Government are confined by the Education Act of 1876. My noble Friend says that this Departmental legislation is much to be deprecated. I am not responsible for that mode of dealing with educational law. If, year after year, an Act of Parliament had to be obtained for altering the Code, anyone may imagine what enormous difficulties would have to be encountered. As a matter of fact, the Code, as my noble Friend has shown, can be assailed upon any point which anyone chose to take up. There would, no doubt, be a difficulty in doing this in the House of Commons, but in your Lordships' House there is none, because we have abundance of time, and whenever my noble Friend wishes to attack the Code he can certainly do so. My noble Friend says that £1 ought to be given for every child in every school of the country. The limit which can be given is 17s. 6d. No doubt 17s. 6d. is only a limit where it is not met by other resources of the school; but, as a matter of fact, it is practically the limit for many schools. That being so, we cannot, of course, deal with the question in the way my noble Friend desires. And now a few words as to what is a variable and invariable grant. I do not know whether your Lordships have read my noble Friend's Resolution. It is not in my opinion easy to construe. What I understand my noble Friend to want is that there should be a uniform grant, a fixed amount, whether the school is bad or good; but that if a school is backward and does not make up the deficiencies pointed out by the

Inspector it should cease to be recognized. Therefore upon the cessation of recognition the Government grant would be withdrawn.

*Lord NORTON: Not immediately.

*Viscount CRANBROOK: The grant would not cease immediately, but the school would cease to be recognized. Now the present proposal is that there should be a minimum grant of 12s., which could not be withdrawn without 12 months' notice. Therefore the school would have more than 12 months to put itself in a position to retain the 12s. My noble Friend must see that that is a considerable advantage, and in conformity with his own desire so far as it goes. The Inspectors, no doubt, will, as hitherto, give fair consideration to the circumstances of the school and the class of children coming to it. I cannot see a great difference between the present system and a system giving what my noble Friend calls a fixed and invariable amount, if that amount is to depend on the decision of the inspector just as it would in the case of the smaller sum. It ceases to be a fixed grant just as the other ceases if the conditions are not fulfilled. I do not say that I look forward with certainty to the success of this Code, but I do look forward to it with expectation and satisfaction, because it meets the wishes of many most deeply interested in the question. The Royal Commission was composed of two parties, and there were two Reports, but upon the points which the Department has taken up the Commission was practically unanimous. And here I wish to pay my acknowledgments to the Commission for the enormous labour and diligence that it applied to its task, and especially to my noble Friend who was good enough to take the Chair (Lord Cross), and give himself to the work with an industry and intelligence which cannot be over-estimated. But that being so, I think I may put it to your Lordships with some confidence that, as our legislation is founded upon the recommendations of that Committee, it may fairly be accepted *primâ facie*, unless there is something very objectionable in it. The only point before the House at this time is whether or not your Lordships wish that one invariable sum should be given to every school in the country, whatever its condition and efficiency at the time, or that there should be the conditions which the Department propose, and that the grant should not depend, as before, solely on the proficiency on examination of particular children. The Inspectors' duty will be quite a different one from that of examining the children. He will have to satisfy himself as to the general condition of the school, of the class, and of the child; and that the children are brought up in good manners and habits of obedience. It is the character of the school as well as the mere learning that is to be taken into account. I do not wish to occupy time by reading, but in the instructions to the Inspectors, given in the Code itself, it is provided that—

> "The Inspector will bear in mind, in recommending a general grant, the results of any visits without notice made in the course of the school year, and will not interfere with any method of organization adopted in a training college under inspection if it is satisfactorily carried out in the school. To meet the requirements respecting discipline, the managers and teachers will be expected to satisfy the Inspector that all reasonable care is taken in the ordinary management of the school, to bring up the children in habits of punctuality, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, and also to impress upon the children the cheerful obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and of honour and truthfulness in word and act. The Inspector will also satisfy himself that the teacher has not unduly pressed those who are dull and delicate in preparation for examination at any time of the year; and that in classifying them for instruction regard has been paid to their health, their age, and their mental capacity, as well as to their due progress in learning."

I would point out to your Lordships that there might be many cases in which a good school might not pass the number of children required, and it would be a great hardship that a school which was really better in its general character should be in a worse position than another which was really in an inferior condition of general efficiency. My Lords, I think I have dwelt on all the points to which my noble Friend referred, and I have no desire to extend the discussion into the Code itself. If my noble Friend wishes at any time to bring forward the larger question of the whole Code, we shall be prepared to meet him; but in regard to the present point, which is a very narrow one, we believe that the Commission were right in thinking that there should be a graduated scale of efficiency, and that a good village school and a good town school should each have a good grant.

Earl BEAUCHAMP: The noble Viscount has referred to the Inspectors. May I ask my noble Friend whether he will lay upon the Table a copy of the instructions to the Inspectors, because I think unless that is done we are very imperfectly informed as to the whole scheme of the Code.

*Viscount CRANBROOK: I think the noble Lord is a little mistaken. I referred to the instructions to the Inspectors in the Code itself. With regard to the instructions which may be given hereafter to the Inspectors, it is not usual to give those instructions until the Code is established, because they may become absolutely useless if the Code takes a different form.

Earl BEAUCHAMP: My suggestion applied not to the instructions which my noble Friend read from the Code, but those to which he referred at the commencement of his speech as being necessary to the proper understanding of the Code.

*Earl FORTESCUE: I think this Code is a great improvement on its predecessors in various respects. I think the very humane provision that no deduction below 12s. should take place for a year is a very great improvement. I doubt whether sufficient allowance is always made for the very great disadvantage in which schools in sparsely-inhabited districts are placed as regards attendance in bad whether. I know of one case in which two children returning from school across a bleak and exposed tract were cut off from their home by a snow-drift, and it was only by Heaven's mercy that they were discovered before being frozen to death. That is only an illustration of the difficulties of insisting upon regular attendance in schools so situate. It is essential that very great allowance should be made in the case of children who have to go long distances across bleak tracts to school. There is nothing more irrational than the system which formerly existed of requiring a child to be presented in higher standard at the end of the year in the same subjects as that in which it had been presented, not passed, before, and I am gratified that a little common sense has been applied to that rule, which has been a fertile source of over-pressure. I agree with the noble Viscount as to the great advantage of drawing, and it does not seem to meet the requirement that in large schools the boys should be adequately instructed in drawing is at all an unreasonable one. Besides, drawing has the further advantage of developing intelligence while affording rest to the brain from the injurious strain upon it, too often caused by the general undue number of hours devoted to mental study. I still would wish, without going the whole way with my noble Friend, that there were less of fluctuations in the amount awarded in particular years in order to diminish the amount of annual anxiety to managers and teachers, which will be still left under the present Code—anxiety which, in the case of female teachers especially, is often found not only to affect their health, but also in some degree their efficiency in teaching. But, on the whole, I feel grateful to the noble Viscount who presides over the Education Department for having so far followed the recommendation of the very able and indefatigable Commissioners.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

LUNACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Read 3^a (according to order): Amendments made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No 35.)

House in Committee (according to order).

Clause 4.

*Lord THRING: My Lords, in rising to move the omission of this clause I need give but a very short explanation. Under the Army Act, 1881, a particular distinction is drawn between breaches of discipline and crimes, as I will call them—namely, offences which the Act designates as of an immoral, dishonest, and flagrant character, and it provides for distinction to be made in the treatment of the two classes of offences. Accordingly, the prisoner committed for a purely military offence goes to a military prison, and the prisoner convicted of crime goes to a civil prison. The effect is tremendously different. The one man coming out is untainted by what ordinarily called crime, and can go to some respectable sort of labour; the other associates with burglars and men of worse description, and is tainted with the character of a gaolbird, and his future career utterly ruined. The effect of this clause is to entirely reverse the humane provision I have referred to, and to convert what is a purely military offence into a crime. When I referred to this matter on the Second Reading of the Bill, I failed to extract from the noble Lord (Lord Harris) any reason for the alteration. He told me that the submission of sentences to the Judge Advocate would prevent any injustice being done. No one is readier than I am to admit the great ability of the Judge Advocate, but I may remind my noble Friend that the office of Judge Advocate is to judge of the legality of the crime; he has no power whatever to give any authoritative opinion upon the severity or otherwise of a sentence. I will read what was said by Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee on this subject—

> "Your Committee entertain a strong opinion that some high legal authority entirely independent of the military authorities should be appointed to secure the due administration of military justice and the proper protection of the private soldier, in whose interests the office of Judge Advocate was created by Parliament."

I trust your Lordships will not pass this clause, which would allow a man to be branded with disgrace for the very offence which the Act declares is not of "an immoral, dishonest, shameful, or criminal character," and I hope that, at any rate before such a law comes into operation, the Government will appoint that "high legal authority," whose duty it will be, independently of the military authorities, to protect the private soldier.

Moved, as an Amendment, "That Clause 4 be omitted."—(*The Lord Thring.*)

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Lord Harris): I trust your Lordships will approve of the inclusion of this clause in the Army (Annual) Act, and I think when I show your Lordships what are the crimes for which it is proposed that a man shall be sent to a civil prison instead of to a military prison you will agree with the military authorities that it is advisable that a man of the character in question should be for as short a time as possible in the comradeship of soldiers. These are the words of the General Order of 1887, paragraph 99—

> "A sentence that amounts to, or exceeds, one year's imprisonment should be imposed only in cases of disgraceful conduct of an unnatural kind, gross violence to superiors, repeated desertion or fraudulent enlistment, or in cases of persistent offenders whom ordinary punishment has not had the effect of restraining from serious crime. In this latter class of cases the additional sentence of discharge with ignominy is as a rule advisable."

Those are the persons who will be affected by Clause 4 of the Army (Annual) Act of this year; and I do trust that your Lordships will take the view which the military authorities take, that the sooner a person who has been dismissed the Army with ignominy is out of all contact with his honest and honourable comrades the better for the Army.

*Lord THRING: The noble Lord must be aware that if the offences committed are of an immoral, dishonest, and shameful character, then the Act applies at present. The military offences in respect of which this clause subjects the offender to go to a civil prison are military offences which are not of an immoral, dishonest, or shameful character.

Viscount BURY: The noble Lord who has just sat down seems to imply that courts martial are likely to make a constructive crime out of a purely military offence, to discharge the man with ignominy, and thus to send him into the company of felons. Now, I think we may fairly ask the noble Lord whether he can point to any instance in which a court martial has ever done such a thing. I challenge the noble Lord, with all his great experience in military legal matters, to say whether he has known a case in which such a miscarriage of justice has occurred. I believe that anybody who has had experience of courts martial will agree that if he had to be tried either for his life or his honour he would just as soon submit to the decision of a court martial as to that of a civil tribunal.

*Lord THRING: I should like to point out that this clause would be perfectly useless in the cases to which the noble Lord refers. The clause only applies—I cannot repeat this too often—to cases in which a court martial dismisses a man with ignominy for a purely military offence which is not of an immoral, dishonest, and shameful character. At the present moment if the offence is of this character the offender does go to a civil prison, and the whole object of this clause—it has no other meaning whatever—is to subject a man to go to a civil prison for an offence which is not of that character. I challenge the noble Lord to dispute the statement.

*LORD HARRIS: I do not think the noble Lord opposite quite puts the matter fairly. He avoids entirely the point of the contention, which is that these are men who have been dismissed with ignominy—I admit for military offences, but from the words I read to the House your Lordships will see that it is only enforced after repeated offences. The noble Lord's desire is to retain what has only been the custom for the last eight years because this was the previous practice for forty years. The old practice was altered by a Bill which, I believe, the noble Lord himself drafted in 1879. It is now sought to revert to the old practice, and the military authorities are, in my opinion, well justified in desiring to get out of the association altogether of honourable soldiers these men who have been tried and convicted of repeated offences, and eventually dismissed from the Army with ignominy.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I quite understand that military offences may be of such a serious nature, that their repetition may well justify a man's dismissal from the Army with ignominy; but what I cannot understand from the noble Lord's explanation is, why in the case of any military offence whatever, being a purely military offence, it is right that he should be sent to a civil prison. My noble Friend merely begs the question when he says that these men have been dismissed with ignominy, and do not any longer belong to the Army; that is merely repeating the clause itself. The question is, ought those who have been dismissed with ignominy for military offences to be sent to a civil prison; what are the classes of cases for which a man under this clause could be dismissed with ignominy?

*LORD HARRIS: There is, for instance, the striking of a superior officer; that is one of the offences for which a man can already be dismissed with ignominy, and it is a purely military offence.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Then I venture to say that the case of my hon. Friend is proved. This military offence of striking an officer is not, in itself, a shameful offence. In civil matters it would probably be an ordinary case of common assault. Of course, it may be a most serious military offence, and it may be right that the soldier should be dismissed with ignominy; but my noble Friend's argument is perfectly clear that the punishment for a military offence of that nature ought not to involve the man in the degradation which attaches to a man who has been sent to consort with felons in a civil prison.

*LORD THRING: With regard to one portion of the noble Lord's argument, I would ask, can a man be guilty of an offence which disqualifies him from association with his fellow soldiers, though the offence is not dishonest, immoral, or shameful?

*LORD NAPIER OF MAGDALA: This question may be easily explained. A soldier may commit a grave military offence, combined with offences of a dishonest or immoral nature. The soldier receives a certain pay to perform a certain duty. There are some men—very few, I am happy to say, but there are some—who take the pay and will not do the duty; men who malinger, who pretend to be sick, who commit small offences to get short imprisonments; who, in fact, resort to every trick which will enable them to cheat the Government and to avoid performing their share of the work. There is no use in keeping such men in the Army. You cannot reform them—you cannot punish them. The only thing you can do is to dismiss them with ignominy; and these men would have a fatal influence if allowed to consort with honourable soldiers after conviction. My Lords, I support the retention of this clause.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported without Amendment; and to be read 3ª on Monday next.

LOCAL TAXATION—LICENCES.

The Earl of **MILLTOWN**, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether it is proposed, before handing over the proceeds of the licences to the County Councils, to deduct the expense of collecting the same, or whether that expense is to fall on the Imperial Exchequer, said: My Lords, the question which stands in my name involves a point of very considerable interest to the taxpayers of the United Kingdom, and especially to the income taxpayers. Your Lordships are aware that by the 20th clause of the Local Government Bill, the proceeds of what are called the Local Taxation Licences are directed to be handed over to the County Councils, but the clause is silent as to who is to pay the expense of collecting this money, and it appears probable that it will be handed over without any deduction whatever. That would, I submit, be a very great injustice to the income taxpayers of the country. The question is not a small one; the amount involved is very considerable. In round numbers, the total amount to be collected will be about three millions of money, and it is estimated by those acquainted with the matter that the cost of collection will amount to something like 10 per cent.

*Lord **STANLEY** of **ALDERLEY**: I hope that Her Majesty's Government will never relinquish the collection of assessed taxes and licences, or the last state of the taxpayer would be worse than the first. If a deduction were made local bodies might wish to collect, but they would not be able to do it so easily and cheaply as the experienced officials who now collect. It would be almost impossible for the Government to enter into minute accounts with the County Councils, since some of the licences, such as those for armorial bearings and shooting, were general to the whole country, and not limited to any one county. It was said the evening before that the criticisms had been hard upon the Inland Revenue; those made by me were only upon the arguments put forward on the part of the Inland Revenue in the Return then before the House. I have always found the Inland Revenue officials ready to hear reason, and a satisfactory Department for correspondence; that would not be the case with Local Authorities.

Viscount **TORRINGTON**: It is not proposed to take into account the charge for collection. The money will be handed over to the County Councils, in accordance with the 20th section of the Local Government Act, without deduction.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Appointed:—The Lords following, with the Chairman of Committees, were named of the Committee:—

L. Privy Seal
(E. Cadogan)
E. Cowper
E. Stanhope
V. Oxenbridge
L. Balfour
L. Foxford
(E. Limerick)
L. Colville of Culross
L. Kensington

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL—(No. 39.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday next.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

House adjourned at Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 5th April, 1889.

NEW WRIT.

Viscount **WOLMER** (Hampshire, Petersfield): I beg leave to move that Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant for a New Writ for the City of Birmingham, Central Division, in the room of the Right Hon. John Bright, deceased.

Colonel **NOLAN** (Galway, N.): Before the Writ is moved, I should like to ask a question of the noble Lord—namely, whether before moving the Writ he had communicated with the Whips in the usual manner, because the customary course is to move for new Writs at the time of public business? I do not see any of the hon. Members present who usually interest themselves in these matters.

Mr. **SPEAKER**: I first of all ascertained from the noble Lord that he had communicated with the Whips and with the hon. Member (Mr. Dillwyn), who gave notice yesterday of his intention to move the Writ. The noble Lord stated that he had done so, and I then gave permission for the Writ to be moved.

Viscount WOLMER: I communicated with the hon. Member for West Nottingham (Mr. A. Morley).

Motion agreed to.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER (SCOTLAND) BILL – CORRECTION OF ERROR IN THE JOURNALS.

Mr. Arthur Elliot and Mr. Mark Stewart, the Tellers for the Ayes in the Division of Wednesday last on the Second Reading of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister (Scotland) Bill, on the Question "That the Question be now put 'That the word "now" stand part of the Question,'" came to the Table and acquainted the House that they had erroneously reported to the House the number of the Ayes as 203, instead of 193, which was the proper number corresponding with the Division List.

Ordered, That the Clerk do correct the said Error in the Journal of this House by stating the number of the Ayes as 193, instead of 203.

QUESTIONS.

OFFICIAL POSTCARDS.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether Her Majesty's Government have any intention of reducing the price of the official postcard to the same level as that at which practically the same card, duly stamped at Somerset House, can now be purchased from any ordinary stationer; whether two Departments of the State, the Inland Revenue and the Post Office, in effect compete one with the other in the production of an article which has always been understood to be the monopoly of the latter; whether Her Majesty's Government have as yet arrived at any decision upon the offer contained in the letters from Messrs. De la Rue, dated the 9th and 21st November, which were laid upon the Table of the House towards the close of last Session; and, if so, whether he will state what annual saving, or other financial outcome, as compared with the year 1887-8, will result to the British and Indian Governments respectively under the contract made last year and under any arrangement that now may be about to be entered into with Messrs. De la Rue for the supply of British and Indian adhesive stamps, postcards, wrappers, envelopes, and Indian stamped papers; and, whether there is still an objection upon the part of Her Majesty's Government to lay upon the Table of the House any Reports in connection with this subject that may have been made by the different Departments concerned since the date of Messrs. De la Rue's letter?

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) also asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he was aware that, in consequence of the price of postcards charged by the Post Office, as compared with the price at which they may be purchased at stationers' shops, the number of postcards printed and sold by private persons had during the last three years increased from 5,000,000 to 50,000,000, and that one firm alone makes a profit of £300 a year by the sale of privately printed postcards?

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): Is it the fact that this offer has already been five months before the Treasury, and that until it is confirmed Messrs. De la Rue will be receiving £500 a month more than they are ready to accept by the contract.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The hon. Gentleman behind me asks whether Messrs. De la Rue's offer has not been five months before the Treasury, and whether during that time a loss has not been incurred. A loss may have been incurred, but we have been simply paying what we are bound to pay under the existing contract, and I do not think that the loss has been going on for so long a period as five months. I think I shall be able to satisfy the hon. Gentleman that advantage will have been reaped from the delay, inasmuch as Messrs. De La Rue have now proposed to shorten the period of the contract from 10 to seven years, or rather to take the contract for 10 years under the condition that it may be shortened by either of the contracting parties to seven years. If the offer of Messrs. De La Rue is accepted, it is the distinct intention of the Government to reduce the price of the official postcard. I am not prepared to say whether it will be reduced to the same level as that at which the same card can be purchased from the ordinary stationer. It is not the fact that the Inland Revenue and the Post Office compete with one another in the production of an article which has always been understood to be the monopoly of the latter. The annual saving as compared with the year 1887-8, which would result to the British and Indian Governments respectively under the arrangement which can now be entered into on the basis of Messrs. De La Rue's offer, would be to the English Government in one year £26,478 3s. 8d., and to the Indian Government £14,041 15s. 8d., making altogether £40,519. The total saving would be in two years to the English Government £52,956 7s. 4d., and to the Indian Government in two-and-a-half years £35,104 9s. 2d., making a total saving of £88,060 16s. 6d. As to the acceptance of these proposals, the Government, I freely admit, have found themselves in the greatest possible embarrassment with regard to it. They are convinced that it would involve a great saving to the country to accept the terms offered. But they have before them the Report of the Select Committee, stating that there ought to be competition in contracts of this kind, though that Report is hedged round by a phrase saying, "Where it is possible to do so for such short periods as the interests of the public might demand." We are firmly convinced—the Postmaster General, the Secretary to the Treasury, and myself—that we should do better to take this saving of £88,000 that is offered than to risk it by an appeal to competition under the present circumstances of the case. The circumstances are most peculiar. The Inland Revenue, and especially the Controller of Stamps, have examined the terms most carefully, and have compared them with the price of paper and stamps in foreign countries; and the competition which was entered into in the Indian contract has shown that the calculation of the Controller of Stamps was perfectly correct, and that if we proceeded on that basis we should get as good terms as could possibly be obtained. But for the Report of the Select Committee we should unanimously have no hesitation in accepting the contract; and I am bound to state that it is our wish and almost our decision to accept that contract, so as to be able to realize the saving, and reduce the price of these postcards at once. If strong remonstrances are made by Members of the Committee, or by any large portion of this House, they will deserve the most respectful consideration. But in the absence of such remonstrances Her Majesty's Government will think it their duty to accept the contract.

MR. GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): May I ask whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will undertake, before he accepts the contract, that no firm shall have it which does not pay trade union prices? I press for an answer.

*MR. GOSCHEN: I confess that the question is a difficult one, and I do not know whether it is the view of the House that in all Government contracts, not the market price, but trade union prices should be demanded for the *employés.* I think it would lead to controversy, and open up a subject of extreme complication; and though the Government are most anxious that those employed under Government contracts shall be properly paid, I am afraid that such interference would cause considerable difficulty.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Would this contract absolutely shut the door to a proposal to enable persons to prepare their own postcards and to put stamps on them?

* MR. GOSCHEN: There will be nothing in the contract to prevent this. It would be a separate matter for the consideration of the Postmaster General.

In reply to Mr. HEATON,

*MR. GOSCHEN said the new contract will be for ten years from now—that is, eight years beyond the contract now running. But the total addition will be only five years instead of eight years, if the Government should have reason to think that they can make better terms at the conclusion of five years.

THE EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS ACT.

MR. HUGH ELLIOT (Ayrshire, N.) asked the Lord Advocate whether, when Schemes of the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Commissioners are, in compliance with the Educational Endowments (Scotland) Act (1882), laid upon the Table of the House and ordered to be printed, the Scotch Education Department will be prepared to print and circulate among Members, before such Schemes come up for consideration in the House, copies either of the original deeds upon which these charities are founded, or of such portions of them as have reference to the governing body or the purposes to which the founder intended the income of his endowment should be applied?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Buteshire): This is not authorized by the Educational Endowments Act. The evidence heard by the Commissioners is printed with their Report; but the documents submitted in connection with the Schemes are often numerous and voluminous, and to make a selection might give rise to misunderstanding. In almost every case the operative words of the Trust Deed are given in the printed evidence.

THE CRIMES ACT.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) asked the Solicitor General for Ireland what was the number of persons proceeded against under "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," between 30th November, 1888, and 31st March, 1889; how many of these were convicted; how many of these sentences were appealed against successfully; how many unsuccessfully; and what was the total number of persons in prison on 31st March, 1889, under the provisions of the said Act?

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, University of Dublin): I am informed that between November 30, 1888, and March 31, 1889, the number of persons proceeded against under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, was 304. Of these there were convicted 208; appeals were lodged in 76 instances; eight sentences were confirmed, six reduced, and the remaining 62 appeals are still pending. The number of persons in prison on March 31 under this Statute appears to have been 70. This was the number on the following day, the 1st of April, the date at which the Return before me was made up.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to the sentence of 28 days with hard labour inflicted on Eliza Cole, of Cradley Heath, at the Old Hill Petty Sessions, for stealing some coal the property of the Earl of Dudley, and, if he can see his way, considering the girl's youth, to remit some of the penalty?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir. I have received a Report from the Justices on this case. There had been three previous charges against the girl, who is 18 years old, for a similar offence. She had been once cautioned and twice convicted, and was sent on her second conviction to a reformatory for three years. She had since her release from the reformatory on more than one occasion been detected stealing coal and warned by the watchmen at the same colliery. Under the circumstances I see no reason for interference.

IRELAND—EVICTIONS ON THE OLPHERT ESTATE.

MR. CLANCY asked the Solicitor General for Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the following paragraph which appeared in the Dublin *Daily Express* of March 28th:—

> "Letterkenny, Wednesday.—In view of the Olphert estate evictions, there reached here today an iron-hooped, spiked battering ram, fifteen feet long, on a four-wheeled ram-carriage. The ram, suspended by chains from four iron uprights, will ram horizontally, while the rammers are protected by a wall of sheet iron. The accompanying appliances consist of boat hooks, chains, ropes, shod poles, crowbars, picks, sledges, scaling ladders, admitting four abreast, making three cartloads. They were all addressed to County Inspector Lennon, and are stored in the police barracks here."

And whether it is true, as alleged, that the battering ram and the other appliances mentioned were addressed to County Inspector Lennon, and ordered by him; and, if so, under what authority the police are entitled to provide for landlords in Ireland appliances for breaking into and battering down their tenants' houses, and out of what fund will come the cost of such articles?

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) also asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a battering ram, two ladders, seven step-ladders, two boathooks, four pickaxes, three sledge hammers, six shields, and other eviction apparatus, were recently ordered in the city of Derry by District Inspector Law; that they were sent to evictions in the southern part of the county of Donegal, sent back to Derry, transferred from the Northern Railway Station to the Lough Swilly Railway Station under the superintendence and charge of the police, and forwarded to Letterkenny, consigned to District Inspector Law and other police officers; by whose instructions and at whose expense District Inspector Law has acted in this matter; and whether it is intended that in future the police, instead of the Sheriff, shall provide the battering rams and other apparatus for evictions?

*Mr. MADDEN: The Constabulary authorities report that it is the case that a battering ram and other appliances were addressed to County Inspector Lennon, and placed in the county store at Letterkenny. The fund from which the cost will come has not yet been decided. These appliances have not been provided for landlords, but for the protection of the Constabulary forces when engaged in the discharge of their duty. It was found that the lives of the officers and men of the Royal Irish Constabulary had been seriously endangered in endeavouring to force an entrance into barricaded houses, in order to arrest rioters who were engaged in open and violent resistance to the law.

In reply to Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.),

*Mr. MADDEN said: These appliances are for the protection of the Constabulary, and to enable them to discharge their duty effectively.

Mr. WILSON: By whom have they been ordered?

*Mr. MADDEN: By the Constabulary authorities.

Mr. CLANCY (Dublin Co., N.): Am I to understand that the Government have come to the conclusion that it is not the landlords of Ireland, but the Constabulary, who are to carry out evictions?

*Mr. MADDEN: The hon. Member must understand nothing of the kind, but it must be understood that it is the duty of the authorities to protect the Constabulary in the discharge of their duties.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Out of what fund will the cost of this battering ram be defrayed, and will it be taken to all evictions as a matter of course, or only sent for in cases of necessity, when the police find a place barricaded?

*Mr. MADDEN: I cannot now say exactly the fund out of which the cost will be defrayed. The Constabulary authorities will exercise their discretion as to its use.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): By whose authority has this battering ram been procured? Have the Inspector General and the authorities at the Castle been consulted?

*Mr. MADDEN: In the answer I gave I referred to the local Constabulary authorities, but I have no reason to suppose that the action of the local authorities has not the sanction of the Inspector General. The right hon. Gentleman, however, had better put the question on the Paper.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton): By whose authority, and when, have battering rams been constructed on the model of the 13th century?

*Mr. MADDEN: I cannot say.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): How has it occurred that battering rams have to be used, when only the other day the Chief Secretary told me that the police and military were only present for the protection of the emergency men and not to act as emergency men themselves?

Mr. MADDEN: The hon. Member must give notice of that question.

MILITIA ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

Viscount WOLMER asked the Secretary of State for War whether he is prepared to grant a Committee to inquire into the organization and administration of the Militia?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I have watched with great care the various suggestions which have been made by my noble Friend and others for improving the efficiency of the Militia, and I am of opinion that the time has come for considering them in detail with the view of taking action in the matter. With this object I have convened a conference of all the commanding officers of Militia shortly after Easter, and the further action which it may be necessary to take must largely depend upon the result of that conference. I am confident of receiving the cordial co-operation of all interested in the efficiency of the Militia.

EGYPTIAN PREFERENCE SHARES.

SIR ROBERT FOWLER (London) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the rumours which have been for some time in circulation on the subject of the proposed conversion of the Egyptian Preference Loan, and the reduction of interest from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, and to the official telegrams from Cairo recently published, such conversion has been submitted for approval to Her Majesty's Government, as one of the Great Powers whose consent is necessary; and whether in view of the opinions given by the hon. Member for Stockton and the hon. Member for South Hackney, that such conversion can only be effected with the consent of the bondholders, Her Majesty's Government will afford the bondholders an opportunity of stating their views before giving such consent?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir JAMES FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.: No formal proposal has been submitted to Her Majesty's Government, and until they are made acquainted with the terms of the proposed conversion, it is impossible for them to express any opinion, or to pledge themselves as to the course which they will adopt.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA AND IRISH CATTLE.

COLONEL WARING (Down, N.) asked the Vice Chamberlain whether he is aware that the 11 Irish bullocks, among which pleuro-pneumonia was alleged to have originated at Carlisle, were in contact from 2nd February till 26th February with a cow from Westmoreland, purchased for £3 10s. 0d., which, if sound, was worth £11 at an auction in Carlisle, which on the later date was declared by the veterinary inspector to be suffering under that disease; and, whether, under these circumstances, even if one of the bullocks slaughtered was found affected, there is any justification in the assertion that the disease was of Irish origin?

THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount LEWISHAM, Lewisham): The information in the possession of the Agricultural Department on the subject is to the following effect:—A farmer near Carlisle purchased on Carlisle Sands on February 2nd, 12 cattle from an Irish dealer. Eleven of these, which were recognized by the dealer's trade mark, were brought by him from the North of Ireland on the previous day, February 1st. The other animal was purchased by the dealer in Carlisle, but whether this animal came originally from the county of Westmoreland or not is not stated. The 12 cattle were taken home to the farm, and on February 26th the veterinary inspector reported two affected with pleuro-pneumonia. One was a case of long standing, and was recognized by the mark as one of the cattle brought from the North of Ireland on February 1st. The other, which was said to be only slightly affected, was the animal purchased by the dealer in Carlisle. When the ten other cattle brought from Ireland on February 1st were slaughtered, three were found affected with pleuro-pneumonia. Four out of the 11 cattle brought from Ireland on February 1st, being found to be affected with pleuro-pneumonia on February 26th, the inspector of the local authority came to the conclusion that the disease had been imported from Ireland.

COLONEL WARING: Will the noble Lord make further inquiries, as the information I have received is very different from that now stated to the House.

VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: I think the information in the hands of the Privy Council on the subject is very full.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): Will the noble Lord say in what parts of Ireland pleuro-pneumonia is prevalent?

VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: I must ask hon. Member to give notice of that question.

CROWN COUNSEL.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) asked the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the special circumstances of the case which made it necessary to retain the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Mr. Dicey, and Mr. R. S. Wright on behalf of the Crown in the case of the Crown *v.*

Stevenson, which was an information by the Attorney General to recover penalties for keeping an illicit still; and what was the total amount of fees paid to these counsel?

MR. JACKSON: According to the arrangement made in pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee on the legal business of the Government, the responsibility as to the number of counsel to be instructed rests with the Attorney General. The case in connection with the illicit distillery, which has just been concluded, was one of the most important that has been tried for many years. There were five cases against seven different people, and between 50 and 60 witnesses, and the case was one requiring the closest attention. The Attorney General originally directed that one Law Officer only should be instructed, but having regard to the nature of the case, the necessity of constant supervision, and the fact that the Customs had another case on in the House of Lords at the same time, it was deemed to be absolutely necessary to instruct both Law Officers. The instruction to the juniors was in accordance with the practice in cases of such a nature. The Attorney General personally investigated the case before giving directions as to counsel. As regards the amount of fees, it is wholly unusual to make any such statement, and it would, in my opinion, be detrimental to the public service that any such statement should be made.

MR. PICKERSGILL gave notice that in Committee of Supply he should call attention to this matter.

THE MIDDLESEX MAGISTRATES.

MR. PICKERSGILL asked the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that the Middlesex Magistrates, at their final meeting on Thursday last, passed a Resolution to make a present of £200 to their clerk; under what authority was this done; and does he propose to interfere in the matter?

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): Will not this £200 under the Local Government Act become a liability of the London County Council? What further claim will the Clerk of the Middlesex Magistrates have upon the Council?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Magistrates, I believe, dealt with their accounts before handing them over. With regard to the question of the hon. Member for the South West Division of Bethnal Green, I have made inquiry on the subject from the Clerk of the Peace, and I am informed that at the meeting referred to a sum of £200 was voted to Mr. Beal, the acting Clerk to the Committee for Accounts and General Purposes, in view of the fact that his salary was considered to have afforded him inadequate remuneration, owing to the amount of work which had devolved upon him. It was stated at the meeting that the clerical assistance obtained by Mr. Beal had cost him the greater part of his salary. The Local Government Board have no control with respect to any remuneration which Quarter Sessions may have thought fit to award to an officer, and they could not interfere in the matter.

TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

BARON DE ROTHSCHILD (Bucks, Aylesbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact that in 1881 the clerks of the Central Telegraph Office with 18 years' service and receiving £160 per annum (the then maximum of the senior class) were considered by the late Mr. Fawcett to be suffering a grievance, and were consequently placed upon a newly made class rising to £190 per annum; whether clerks at present with 18 years' service are now, and have been for the past two years, receiving only £140 per annum, and with apparently no prospect of further promotion; and what is the cause of this difference of treatment of two bodies of officers?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. H. C. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The raising of the scale of pay of the senior telegraphists of the Central Telegraph Office in 1881 was part of a general scheme for improving the position of telegraphists all over the country. The question was not affected by the number of years any particular officers had served, but had reference to the character of the duties performed by the members of the various classes. There are telegraphists of the first class in the Central Telegraph

Office with 18 years' service who are now and have been for the past two years receiving £140 per annum, the maximum pay of the class. There are no vacancies in the class above—*i.e.*, the class of senior telegraphists, and these officers cannot, therefore, at present be promoted. Both bodies of officers benefited in point of pay by the general scheme of 1881, and they are in no different position as regards promotion, as they have both to wait for vacancies in the class above them.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is the case that, in the settlement made in 1881 of the scales of pay of officials in the Telegraph Service, the maximum pay of assistant superintendents in London was £270, whilst the maximum pay of the corresponding class in Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester, known as "clerks," was £190, a difference between London and the Provinces of £80 per annum; whether, since 1881, the maximum pay of assistant superintendents in London has been raised from £270 to £300, whilst no corresponding rise has been granted to the "clerks" in Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester; and, whether he will favourably consider the claims of the "clerks" in Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester, to a rise in their pay?

*MR. RAIKES: The figures given by the hon. Member are stated in the Estimates and are correct so far as they go, but I cannot admit the accuracy of the comparison which he makes, as I explained to the House a few days ago.

MR. CALDWELL: Is it not a fact that the settlement of 1881 has been in many important particulars disturbed?

*MR. RAIKES: The settlement of 1881 was not one of the laws of the Medes and Persians: it is subject to revision from time to time, but good cause must be shown for the alteration.

EMIGRATION TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that advertisements are being issued by P. Van der Linden, on behalf of the Argentine Republic, offering conditional free passages to South America on payment of a fee of 2s. 6d., and a deferred sum of larger amount, and that, the fee having been paid, nothing further is heard on the subject by the applicant; and whether it is possible to put a stop to this system by communication with the Argentine Government, or otherwise?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have heard to-day that such advertisements have been issued, and I understand that the person named is in no way an authorized agent of the Argentine Government, who have only one official emigration agency in England—namely, at 22, Great George Street, Westminster, and that solely for the purpose of affording information to intending emigrants. Such information is given without fee. If, therefore, the facts are as stated in the question, the aggrieved persons would presumably have a legal remedy.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask whether it is not a fact that, though the Argentine Republic may not have an authorized agent, there have been numbers of persons representing themselves as agents, and who have received sums varying from 15s. to £1 per head, on the emigrants sent out under their auspices; and whether, therefore, the public may not have been well induced to believe that these persons were acting with authority?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: It is not known to Her Majesty's Government that such sums have been received as the hon. Gentleman states; but I told the House the other night that such things had been done in certain foreign countries. It is not, however, for me to say what the Argentine Government should do in view of persons making unauthorized representations on their behalf.

WEIGHING EXEMPTIONS AT COAL MINES.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is now held by his Department that exemptions of certain coal mines from the obligation to provide weighing machines, granted to them under the provisions of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1872, are still in force, although that Act was specifically repealed by "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887;" and, if so, what is the total number of coal mines so exempted, and the total tonnage of coal drawn thereat in 1888?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The High Court of Justice has held that weighing exemptions under the Coal Mines Act, 1872, are still in force, notwithstanding the repeal of that Statute. The Secretary of State has, however, the power of revoking such exemptions; and I have more than once stated that whenever application is made to me by persons interested I am prepared to consider the case of each colliery so exempted with a view to arriving at a decision whether the exemption should be revoked. I can supply the hon. Member with the total number of mines exempted, but it will take some little time to ascertain accurately. The tonnage drawn at particular collieries is a matter which ought not to be disclosed under the Act of 1887.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS: I did not ask for the particulars of any colliery, but what is the total tonnage.

GARRISON ARTILLERY.

Mr. HANBURY-TRACY (Montgomery, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is true that 20 batteries of Garrison Artillery are without majors, and are commanded by captains, thereby unduly retarding the promotion of officers of the latter rank; if it is proposed to establish any limit to the number of batteries without majors; and, whether any arrangement has been made with a view of massing the depôts of Garrison Artillery, as recommended by the late Royal Commission?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir; it is true that there are at present 20 batteries of Artillery without majors and commanded by captains. There is a fixed establishment of 275 majors for the Royal Artillery, 48 of whom are for employment on the Staff; if any beyond this number are so employed a lieutenant is promoted to the rank of captain to fill the vacancy, and consequently there must be a certain number of batteries without majors. Details for the redistribution and concentration of the Garrison Artillery are now being worked out.

IRELAND—THE MASSEREENE ESTATE.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Solicitor General for Ireland whether a National League Convention was held at Drogheda on Thursday, the 21st March, at which the Mayor presided, and the letting of evicted farms on the Massereene estate was denounced; whether, immediately following the holding of this meeting, a valuable corn mill on the property of Mrs. M'Givney was burned to the ground; whether Mrs. M'Givney is a Roman Catholic tenant on the Massereene estate who refused to join the Plan of Campaign; and whether the police have any information to show the fire to have been malicious?

Mr. GILL: Before the hon. and learned Gentleman answers the question, I have to ask him whether there is any connection between the burning and the organization of the tenants; whether, when the suggestion was first made, it was not indignantly contradicted by the Conservative organ in Drogheda as a miserable slander upon these tenants; and whether Mrs. M'Givney herself has not repudiated the suggestion that her neighbours, with whom she has lived on the best of terms, have had anything to do with this burning, which she believes to have been either accidental or the work of some passing tramp?

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): May I ask whether the hon. and learned Gentleman will answer the question on the paper at all, seeing that the answer might prejudice the claim for damages at the Presentment Sessions?

*Mr. MADDEN: I do not think the answer will affect any claim. The constabulary authorities report that it is the case that a National League Convention was held at Drogheda at which the Mayor attended, at which it is stated he presided, and at which a resolution was proposed denouncing in the strongest terms the action which had taken place in relation to the taking of the evicted farms on the Massereene estate. About five hours afterwards the corn mill referred to was destroyed by fire, together with the machinery, and the walls, although standing, have been rendered useless. Mrs. M'Givney and son are both Roman Catholic tenants on the estate, and refused to join the Plan of Campaign when adopted there. The police believe the fire to have been malicious, but so far, no person has been made amenable. I am not aware there is any information connecting the occurrence with any person in particular. If the hon. Member for Louth (Mr. Gill) will put his question on the paper I will endeavour to answer it.

MR. SEXTON: Does the hon. Gentleman not consider that his statement that the police believe the injury to be malicious, will be prejudicial to the question of claim? And may I ask him to endeavour to undo the harm he has done by stating whether this is merely the belief of the police, or whether the statement rests on evidence?

*MR. MADDEN: Having received information from the Constabulary authorities on the subject, I am bound to give an answer to the hon. Member who puts that question; and I presume that when they state that they believe the burning to have been malicious, of course they acted on some information which was before them.

MR. GILL: May I ask whether the tenant referred to here is not a tenant who has taken land from which another tenant has been evicted, and consequently is not of the class which is supposed to have been denounced?

*MR. MADDEN: I am unable to answer the question without notice.

THE EDUCATION CODE, 1889.

MR. OLDROYD (Dewsbury): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education at what date, subject to the promised discussion in Parliament, the new Code of Regulations (1889) will come into force?

SIR W. HART DYKE: It is not in contemplation to bring any of the provisions of the new Code into operation before the close of the present statistical year on the 31st of next August.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Will the First Lord of the Treasury give us an opportunity of discussing very important matter?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope the House will have ample opportunity of discussing the question.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD FIELDS—THE RUDD CONCESSION.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that a Company has been formed, called the Gold Fields of South Africa Company, under the Limited Liability Laws of this country, with a view to obtain capital to work a portion of the concession granted by Lo Bengula to Mr. Rudd, with considerable monetary advantages to that gentleman and to those who are his partners in the concession; and whether he will explicitly state that Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to interfere in any way in order to maintain any rights which may have been granted under this concession to British subjects?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): I have not such information as would enable me to answer the first question put by the hon. Member, because, as I have frequently explained in the House, these concessions are altogether beyond the cognizance and jurisdiction of Her Majesty's Government, which cannot, and does not attempt to, control them. It is understood, however, that the gold fields of the South Africa Company was formed long before the concession was granted to Mr. Rudd and his associates, who acted independently of that Company. In answer to the second question, Her Majesty's Government are not prepared, under existing circumstances, to interfere in any way. They could not advise Lo Bengula to break any concession already granted, though they might advise him to modify it. As stated in my reply to the hon. Member for the St. Austell Division on March 15th, Lo Bengula has been recommended not to grant concessions without careful consideration and advice, and not to grant monopolies to individuals.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me what is the difference between breaking a concession and modifying a concession?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I think the hon. Gentleman knows quite well what is the difference.

MR. BRADLAUGH: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government have changed their policy since May last, and whether the recommendations to Lo Bengula were made in accordance with the policy declared in writing by Lord Knutsford?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The Government have not in any way changed their policy.

MR. BRADLAUGH: Did not Lord Knutsford declare in writing that no concession would be approved which had not been made known to the High Court?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: If the hon. Gentleman will put a question on the Paper I shall be glad to give him an answer.

MAGISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS IN INDIA.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Div.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether it is true that in the course of the evidence recently given before the Crawford Commission certain native magistrates, under promise of indemnity from the Government of Bombay, gave evidence that they had corruptly purchased their judicial appointments and promotion; and whether it is true that the Judges of the Bombay High Court specially responsible for the representations of minor courts and officers sent the Bombay Government a protest pointing out the illegality of maintaining on the Bench magistrates who had corruptly purchased appointments and promotion; and, if so, what steps have been taken to put an end to the scandal against which the Judges of the Bombay High Court protested?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): This is substantially the same question as that put to me by the hon. Member on the 19th March. I have nothing to add to the answers already given, except that the Secretary of State has been informed that further papers in reference to the incriminated magistrates are on their way to this country.

DR. CAMERON: But all I was told previously was that papers were on their way to this country. The really important question is whether these magistrates are still occupied on the Bench or whether they have been suspended?

*SIR J. GORST: I said on the former occasion it was the opinion of the Secretary of State that no public statement could be made without detriment to the public service.

DR. CAMERON: I do not ask for any statement; all I wish to know is whether these corrupt magistrates are still on the Bench? [*Cries of* "Answer!"]

*SIR J. GORST: Nothing is further from my intention than to be disrespectful to either the House or the hon. Member. This matter is before the Secretary of State in a judicial capacity; he has it under consideration with the aid of his Council; and he has instructed me to say that any official statement would be detrimental to the interests of justice. I appeal to the House whether they will not sanction my preserving for some short time the silence which the Secretary of State has imposed upon me.

IRELAND—PRISON TREATMENT OF MR. E. HARRINGTON.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Lord Lieutenant having, without any application from prisoner, "remitted" the hard labour imposed upon Mr. Edward Harrington, M.P., the so-called remission, whilst making no change in his employment, has had the effect of aggravating his punishment, by depriving him of four ounces of meat and half a pint of milk per day; and whether, as Mr. Harrington is now declared entitled to receive visits, and as his wife, who resides at Tralee, has to travel 529 miles to and from Tullamore in order to pay him a visit, he will be sent back to Tralee Prison for the residue of his term of six months, no cause having been stated for his removal from Tralee; and perhaps I may explain that the object of the question is to show that the supposed leniency of the Lord Lieutenant in relieving Mr. Harrington of hard labour has the effect at the same time of depriving him of four ounces of meat daily?

*MR. MADDEN: The Prisons Board report that the difference between the employment of prisoners sentenced to hard labour and those not so sentenced is not always in the nature of the labour, but in the quantity exacted from the prisoner. The statement in the question as to the reduction of food in Mr. Harrington's case by reason of the remission of hard labour is incorrect. Prisoners are not allowed meat daily, and there is no difference whatever in the quantity of meat per week allowed to a prisoner whether sentenced to hard labour or not in that class in which Mr. Harrington is; but those not sentenced to hard labour are allowed daily a quarter of a pint less milk than those sentenced to hard labour. The distance by rail from Tralee to Tullamore is not correctly stated. It is about 182 miles. The Prisons Board see no sufficient ground to re-transfer Mr. Harrington to Tralee.

Mr. SEXTON: I should like to ask whether it is not a fact that Mr. E. Harrington himself, who ought to know best, has made a statement to a person who interviewed him within the last three days, that he has lost the four ounces of meat daily; and also whether Mr. Harrington's wife travelled from Tralee to visit him, and was prevented from doing so by the unauthorized action of the Prisons Board, and whether she is now to make that journey again?

*Mr. MADDEN: The Chief Secretary has already answered the latter part of the question, and stated that the error has been rectified. As to the statements made by the right hon. Gentleman in the first part of his question I know nothing, but I have given the information supplied to me from the best source available to me—namely, the information given me by the Prisons Board.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he would state to the House how he intends to arrange business so as to fulfil his undertaking and the expectations of the people of Scotland to make this a Scotch Session, and I should like to explain that I put the question down before I heard the statement of the Lord Advocate yesterday.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I understand that the hon. Gentleman does not expect any further answer.

Mr. ESSLEMONT: Oh, yes, I do.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I believe that if I were now to enter into a lengthened explanation of the manner in which I propose to arrange business for the rest of the Session in regard to Scotch Bills I should occupy more time than I should be justified in doing. But I may say that if the hon. Member and other hon. Gentlemen who are interested in Scotch business will give assistance to the progress of other necessary and inevitable business, then I believe there will be ample time available for Scotch business.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): Will the Scotch Local Government Bill be made the first Government business after the Scheme of Naval Defence?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member is aware that there is financial business which it is absolutely essential should be considered; but, subject to that consideration, the Scotch Bills will take a foremost place in all our arrangements in regard to the business of the House. I was asked yesterday by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian what the business for Thursday will be. We propose to take Supply first on Thursday, and later in the evening to introduce the Bill relating to the Sugar Bounty Convention.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: May I ask whether, considering the progress made with the Naval Resolutions last night, the Scotch Bills will be absolutely the first business on Monday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: It is possible that there may be some more or less formal business taken first thing on Monday, but substantially the Scotch Bills will be the first business on that day.

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION (SPECIAL REPORT).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection, That they had selected the following six Members to be the Chairmen's Panel, and to serve as Chairmen of the two Standing Committees to be appointed under Standing Order 47:—Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry James, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Salt, and Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MOTIONS.

ARMY (BREECH-LOADING GUNS).

Address for—

"Return of the number of breech-loading guns for Imperial purposes (land service) at the present time, specifying the number of each diameter."—(*Mr. Duff.*)

CARRIERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bromley Davenport, Bill to amend the Carriers Act, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bromley Davenport, Mr. Staveley Hill, and Mr. Harry Davenport.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 178.]

LEASEHOLDERS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Macartney, Bill to amend "The Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1888," with regard to Leaseholders, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macartney, Mr. O'Neill, Colonel Waring, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Lea, and Mr. William Sinclair.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 179.]

LAW CLERKS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Gill, Bill to amend the Law for regulating the admission of Law Clerks into the profession of Solicitors in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gill, Mr. Sexton, Mr. M'Cartan, Mr. Crilly, Mr. Richard Power, Mr. William Redmond, Mr. John O'Connor, and Mr. Blane.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 180.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.—COMMITTEE.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE VACCINATION ACTS.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I hope that hon. Members—and they are not a few in number—who have received representations from their constituents of the amount of suffering inflicted on conscientious people by the present operation of the Vaccination Laws, will not think that I am occupying the time of the House unnecessarily by asking them to consider the terms of the Resolution that I intend to propose. Last year I brought in a Bill intended to abolish the compulsory clauses of the Vaccination Acts. I should, perhaps, have done so this year had I been fortunate in the ballot on the first day of the Session. Not being thus fortunate, I had to consider what would be the next best way of dealing with the question. I will not pretend that the proposition I have to make to-day is my ideal, but it is probably the best thing I could possibly do under the circumstances. Something like 17 years have elapsed since the last inquiry was entered upon by a Select Committee of this House. If the Committee had settled the question on any reasonable basis; if it had allayed the public uneasiness which undoubtedly is excited more and more by the danger alleged to be connected with vaccination; if it had suggested any plan for abolishing the hardships suffered by the poor as contrasted with the rich; if it had really facilitated the operation of the law and reduced the amount of friction, I acknowledge that I should have had no case to lay before the House at the present moment. But I do not hesitate to say that the reverse of all that is the actual fact. An important recommendation, perhaps the most important recommendation of that Committee, though adopted by the House, was thrown out in another place. In the meanwhile opinion has been growing that the other conclusions arrived at by the Committee were against the weight of evidence, and not only the weight of evidence furnished to the Committee, but still more against the weight of evidence furnished by after events. For, immediately after the Committee reported, a violent and terrible epidemic of small-pox swept over the land, and set at defiance the antidote which is supposed to furnish an adequate preventive. Very recently there have been outbreaks of small-pox at Sheffield and other places, the effects of which have certainly rivalled in severity the very worst plagues of previous centuries. The resistance to law has increased to such an extent that in many towns it is impossible to conceal the fact that the law has become a dead letter, and in other towns the resistance is such that compulsion is degenerating into persecution, and that often of a cruel character. Enormous fines have been accumulated on the heads of poor people ill able to bear them, and, more than once or twice, Englishmen have had to witness the spectacle of honest and conscientious citizens being conducted through the streets in handcuffs, and sent to the plank-bed and other degradations, for no other reason than that of obedience to their conscience in regard to the duties they believe they owe to their children. Inquiry is earnestly challenged. It is alleged that a better method of combating this fell disease has been tried in the borough that I have the honour of representing, and that this better method has succeeded where the more ordinary method has failed. To crown all, the proverbial differences between doctors have been recently very much aggravated in regard to the subject of small-pox and vaccination, and the greatest Encyclopœdia of this or any other age has admitted to its pages an article by a well-known medical writer, which goes very far indeed to shake public confidence in the preventive furnished by vaccination. Such, Sir, is the case I desire to lay before the House. The recommendation that the law should be satisfied with the imposition of one full penalty and costs on parents in regard to each child that they refused to vaccinate was unanimously adopted by the Committee, and it was embodied in the Bill which was afterwards brought forward and carried through this House. But, Sir, the Bill had to go to another place, and in that place the clause imposing only one penalty on parents for each child was struck out. I may here refer to the words uttered by the late Mr. W. E. Forster, when the Bill came back to this House in a mutilated form. It was, I think, on the 19th August, 1871, when all the Members were anxious to get away from their legislative labours to much needed recreation. According to *Hansard*, Mr. Forster, in complaining that the other House had struck out Clause 10—an important clause, that mitigated the penalties—used these words:—

> "That clause was passed in that House by a majority of 57 to 12, and expunged in the other House by a majority of 8 to 7, the total number of Peers voting being just about equal to the number of Members on the Select Committee, which, after a long and careful consideration, came to a unanimous conclusion in favour of the clause. He should have had no hesitation whatever in asking the House to disagree with the Amendment if the period of the Session would allow of such disagreement without the loss of the Bill."

Now, Sir, I venture to say that this is an instance much too common in the procedure of the so-called Upper House. If the veto were only exercised upon hasty and ill-considered legislation in times of unreasoning agitation, we should have no complaint to make. If the veto stayed our hands when frantic and unreasoning panic extorted from us sanction for tremendous penalties upon destructive idiots suffering from temporary madness, if it stayed our hands when we were driven to sanction the revival of mediæval torture, when burglary and robbery are unusually rife, I should not complain of the exercise of this legislative embargo. But, Sir, it is not so; it is now exercised most frequently when the legislation of this House is most humane, and it is always exercised when that legislation is most responsive to the just sympathies of the people. What has been the consequence? If, Sir, we were dealing with crime—that is to say, with an immoral act so contrary to the public interest that it must needs be put down by law; an act of impurity and disobedience to the moral law; why, then, resolute Government and a constant imposition of fines and imprisonment might possibly succeed. But, Sir, we are dealing with a faculty in man which was never very amenable to fines and imprisonment or even death, and that is, the human conscience. Let me just cite one case in illustration. Most hon. Members have surely heard of poor Charles Hayward of Ashford in Kent, who so conscientiously objects to the practice of vaccination that he feels his duty to his children will not allow him to have them operated upon. But the magistrates and guardians of the district in which he lives will not allow the poor man the luxury of a conscience at all; they think they ought to put down his conscience by fines; and according to the latest statistics from the 19th May, 1885, when the persecution began, down to the 26th of February in this year, he has been 37 separate times fined, the amount of the fines being £63 2s. 6d., including costs. Well, Sir, it is probably more than a year's income of this poor man, and this is taken from him—at least it is supposed to be taken from him—but, perhaps, charity has interfered to prevent such an excessive punishment—in the space of little more than four years—because he chooses to follow the dictates of his own conscience. This is only one illustration, and I believe that a great many others could be cited; but it affords a reason for reconsidering the mode in which the Vaccination Laws are carried out. But, Sir, I contend that some of the general recommendations of the Committee of 1871 were against the weight of evidence. The Committee desired to give greater facilities for carrying out the law and to have more vaccination stations. A simplification was wanted of the work of the public vaccinators, and it was suggested that the registers should be sent to them so that they could more easily account for the children unvaccinated. I believe the objections raised to the practice of vaccination scarcely came within the province of that Committee; at any rate, the evidence they took was, on that part of the case, exceedingly short, and it was not presented at all in full. Nevertheless, proved instances of mischief resulting from vaccination were supplied. I need not dwell upon the evidence which came before the Committee, for a far mightier witness than any that could be brought bodily into the Committee Room was proclaiming everywhere at that time the impotence of the law. Remember that one of the facts proved by a number of the witnesses before the Committee was the almost perfect carrying out of the Vaccination Law over a large part of the country. In the district of St. Luke's, for instance, a vaccination officer testified that there was scarcely a single child unaccounted for. One of the Representatives of Ireland likewise gave evidence before the Committee, and dwelt with emphasis on the fact that vaccination was so universal in Ireland as to have practically abolished small-pox altogether. Dr. Alexander Wood, coming from Scotland, bore similar testimony, and said—

> "I think that there is no small-pox in that country, because the Scotch Vaccination Law of 1863 has entirely stamped it out."

Sir, at that very time, when these confident boasts were being made before the Committee, the plague was stalking from house to house and from city to city. In the year 1871, the deaths from small-pox in the United Kingdom amounted to 25,233, notwithstanding the boasts made as to the extent to which vaccination had been carried out. In the following year, so little had the plague diminished, that the number of deaths amounted to 24,790. And now let me refer to Scotland and Ireland. I have quoted the confident expressions of distinguished witnesses from these countries as to the practical suppression of small-pox by the practice of vaccination, but in the year 1871 there were 665 deaths from the disease in Ireland, and in 1872 the number had risen to 3,248. Again, in Scotland the deaths in 1871 amounted to 1,442 according to one table, and according to another official table to 1,760. In 1872, the deaths in Scotland were 2,448 according to the one table, and 3,073 according to the other. The grand total for the United Kingdom during the two years was 50,023, although vaccination had been in operation since the beginning of the century, and of course with constantly increasing rigour. Well, Sir, we have recently had another experience, and that is in Sheffield. A portentous Report, on that subject, came into my hands only yesterday morning, and I have scarcely been able to digest its pages. Still, I think I must make a remark or two upon it. It is indisputable that Sheffield was one of the best-vaccinated towns in the country. There were only about 5 per cent of the children unaccounted for in the vaccination statistics in the worst districts, and in the best districts even less than 1 per cent. No doubt we shall be told that this residue of 5 per cent was capable of doing an enormous amount of mischief; but, Sir, let us take the figures in the beginning of the century. We have been told over and over again that small-pox was diminishing and almost arrested by the practice of vaccination. Now, how many were vaccinated in the beginning of the century? Certainly not more than from 15 to 25 per cent. We have no accurate statistics to go upon; but I fancy from 15 to 25 per cent would fairly represent the number of children vaccinated. For a time that almost abolished small-pox, and can it now be said that a small residuum of unvaccinated children, amounting to only 5 per cent, is enough to neutralize the charm? I think it is an unreasonable view to take. And now I come to this portentous volume. I find in it that comparatively little attention is given to the sanitary condition of the town. There are scores of pages filled with plausible and striking statistics of the individual effects of vaccination; but there are only a few paragraphs as to the sanitary condition of the town. On page 218 we are told that—

> "In the older parts of the town proper (well represented by the Sheffield township) houses are frequently damp, ill-ventilated, and dark. Also they are crowded together; courts are found within courts, and streets are narrow, winding, and often precipitous. Even in neighbourhoods where villages once in the country have now become surrounded by houses, precisely similar conditions exist. Further, a very large proportion of the houses erected prior to the last ten or fifteen years have been built back to back."

Now I come to a still more terrible

paragraph on page 221, concerning the disposal of refuse. I am sorry to trouble the House with these offensive details; but, Sir, we have to deal with the health of the people. We are told that—

> "Sheffield is essentially a privy midden town; the total number of water-closets in existence up to December 31st, 1887, being only 4,137, chiefly found in houses in Ecclesall, Nether Hallam, Upper Hallam, and Pitsmoor. In the centre of the town shops, offices, and hotels alone are, as a rule, provided with them. If the entire population of the borough is, in accordance with the Registrar General's estimate, taken at about 320,000, and assuming that the 4,137 water-closets each serve for the use of the inmates of two houses, say for 40,000 people, we may conclude that at least 280,000 persons are provided with no other closet accommodation than that afforded by midden privies, and it has been estimated that the actual area occupied by the middens themselves in the borough amounts to considerably over 12 acres."

Later on in the Report we are told—

> "From the plan on which the middens are constructed the contents are kept continually wet by the percolation into them of subsoil and surface water (rain water falling in addition into the unsewered ones), and as a result offensive decomposition of their contents is continually taking place. The middens are habitually used throughout a large part of the town as receptacle for house slops and refuse of every description. As the midden pits are rarely made water-tight, the subsoil necessarily becomes charged with the soakage of excremental filth."

These words are surely significant, and I contend that they afford ample explanation of the origin of small-pox in Sheffield. I have said that the statistics as to vaccination are undoubtedly plausible, and they are also striking; but this observation occurs to me, that they need closer scrutiny than they appear to have received. Let me give an illustration of what I mean. There is a table here dealing with the case of 21 vaccinated children over one month and under one year of age, and of eleven unvaccinated children, who were in houses invaded with small-pox. Now the table shows that of the 21 vaccinated children, only two were attacked, while of the 11 unvaccinated, no fewer than seven were attacked by the disease. Of the vaccinated one died, and of the unvaccinated four died. But why were not these 11 children vaccinated? The answer to the question possibly signifies a good deal. If I may judge from experience of my own, there is a great probability that they were left unvaccinated because they were not considered strong enough to undergo the operation, and of course it is these poor, ill-formed, ill-developed children of weak constitution, who would naturally be the first to succumb to the disease. Therefore I do not attach much value to the figures which have been quoted, and I think any inquiry now held should see how far the statistics can be verified. But, Sir, I have something more to say on the subject. I contend, Sir, we have a right to guard not merely the individual here and there, but the whole commonwealth, and even if the tables were correct, I contend that compulsion would never be justifiable unless you could thereby insure complete immunity from the disease for the whole country. That you cannot do, for we find these tremendous epidemics are continually recurrent. You find some very singular conclusions in the Report. We are told that if the whole town had been unvaccinated, and the deaths had been in the same proportion as they were among the unvaccinated persons attacked, instead of there being only five or six hundred, there would have been at least 7,000 children under ten years attacked and 3,000 would have died. Sir, this is wholly fallacious and unjustifiable, for in the last century, when vaccination was not practised at all, the percentage of deaths among persons attacked was only 18·8, and even now, with vaccination, the percentage is 18·5 for the present century. It is, therefore, absurd to say that so many would have died if the whole population had been unvaccinated. I contend, therefore, that the recommendations of the Committee of 1871 were against the weight of evidence. Public uneasiness has been more and more excited of late by the dangers said to be associated with the practice of vaccination. We all must know of cases in which vaccination has acted badly. John Stuart Mill, in his "Logic," admits the necessity of arguing from particulars to particulars, and although I disagree with his logic, I think he is justified to a certain extent by the actual practice of uneducated persons. If a man has had a child with a dreadfully inflamed arm, and frightful sores breaking out all over his body, immediately after vaccination, can you blame him, when another child comes into the family, if he refuses to let it run that risk? But there is even more than this to be said. Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson, the well-known writer on medical subjects, was examined before the Committee, and he acknowledged that he had observed cases in which sores had broken out, apparently owing to vaccination. In answer to another question, he said the general opinion of the profession was, perhaps, opposed to the belief that syphilis was communicated by vaccination, but he added that that was not the opinion of those who had carefully examined the question. Even in 1871 Mr. Hutchinson was of opinion that syphilis might be communicated by vaccination. But he then told the Committee that infection could always be effectively guarded against by the operator, when taking the lymph, being careful not to draw blood; but afterwards in a treatise which he published he altered that opinion, and said that even where there was no visible blood disease might be conveyed by the lymph. Since 1871 other medical opinions have been expressed to the same effect, and which ever theory may be correct, it is monstrous for the Legislature to go on forcing vaccination upon poor people and declining seriously to inquire into the matter. I do not hesitate to say that the general tenour of the evidence is, that there has been an enormous increase of these syphilitic diseases and of infantine mortality since vaccination was made compulsory. I have shown how the Committee of 1871 had its most important recommendation rejected in another place. I have shown how the Report of the Committee in other respects is against the weight of evidence, that they were not sufficiently alive to the repeated failures of vaccination to protect communities as distinct from individuals. I have shown, I think, that public uneasiness is constantly growing, and that to a large extent it is justified by facts and official statistics. I have shown how in nine towns the Vaccination Laws have become a dead letter, while in other places prosecutions have become a public scandal. I have shown that medical dissent from the theory that vaccination is necessary shows a tendency to increase. I have shown that in the town I have the honour to represent the experiment of relying upon the precautions I have advocated have been tried for 17 years with success. After this my demand cannot be considered unreasonable. I do not ask for a mere formal inquiry, sitting to adopt a foregone conclusion. I do ask, if the Government see their way clear to agree to my proposal, that whatever Commission or Committee may be granted may be impartially constituted; that opposing views shall be represented together with eminent men not previously committed to an attitude of partizanship upon one side or the other, and who will play the part of umpires—perhaps legal gentlemen would be best to sift and weigh the evidence before them. The constitution of the tribunal must rest on the responsibility of the Government. I only ask the House to make the demand. Surely an assembly that embodies to a very large extent both the executive and legislative functions of Government ought to keep its eyes open to every current of opinion, and its ears open to every cry of wrong. And no complaint or grievance, surely, can be more touching than the voice of parental affection pleading for freedom from medical persecution in the exercise of their Heaven-sent responsibility. We owe at least respect to such appeals of parental conscience, and therefore I move the Resolution that stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," in order to add the words "an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying Her to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Vaccination Acts; also into the condition, as regards the prevalence of small-pox or otherwise, of any towns or districts in which the guardians have for two years or more failed to prosecute for refusal to vaccinate, and likewise into the system of compulsory notification, isolation, and quarantine, as carried out in Leicester and elsewhere; to take evidence as to the present state of scientific and medical opinion on the effects of vaccination; to inquire into the nature and causes of popular objections to vaccination, where such exist; and to report whether any change in the law, and, if so, what change, is in their judgment desirable,"—(*Mr. Picton*,)

—instead whereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to second the Motion. It may seem strange that one like myself, who has always been a strong, I might almost say an uncompromising, advocate of vaccination, should support a proposal which many Members will be disposed to think unnecessary, and indeed calculated to unsettle the public mind on this subject; but I am not inclined to take that view. I join in the proposal because I hold that inquiry and investigation of any sort, if open and scientific, must do good and add to our knowledge, and eventually promote the cause of truth. If a thing is good, then inquiry and investigation will only strengthen it; and if it is bad, the sooner we find it out the better, abolish it if necessary, or remedy the defects we may discover. I do not hold that any institution of this country is so sacred or so settled as to be beyond the reach of investigation altogether. We know that my hon. Friend, whom I do not see in his place now (Sir G. Campbell), wishes to prescribe for the British Constitution. I do not know whether he is going to renew his Motion this year or not. Although I consider myself that the question of vaccination is as settled as the British Constitution, yet I cannot forget that there are other people who do not hold that view. I do not think that knowledge and self-confidence should lead us to dogmatize on this or any other subject. I do not think we can ignore the fact that a considerable mass of public opinion and popular sentiment goes against vaccination, and more especially goes against compulsory application of it, and holds that inquiry should be held before an impartial judicial tribunal. I, for one, wish that opportunity to be given. I am bound to say that the hon. Member for Leicester and I approach the facts from different standpoints. No doubt the hon. Member hopes that in the result a heavy blow will be struck at the system of vaccination, or, at all events, at compulsory vaccination. No doubt he thinks that he will be able to prove that the benefits attributed to vaccination are really due to hygienic improvements, and that he will be able to show that many evils result from vaccination. I advocate inquiry from a very different standpoint in the interest of vaccination itself, and in full confidence that it will come out of the inquiry unscathed, and, indeed, largely strengthened. Of course, as many of us know, a great mass of information already exists on the subject. Sir J. Simon, Dr. Buchanan, the able chief of the Medical Department of the Local Government Board, and others, have provided a mass of accurate information, though it is of a somewhat scattered kind, and is to be found in Blue Books and Annual Reports in dusty recesses of this House. Inquiry will have the effect of collecting and concentrating a large mass of information, and perhaps of adding very considerably to it. I wish I could think it would settle the public mind, and I hope in some degree it may. I hope—though I am not very confident in the hope—that when the Commission comes to report we shall reach a state of finality if that is attainable at all, that if the verdict is for vaccination, if it is proved that the allegations of its opponents are not supported by facts, then I hope that the agitation that has worried us so much with its literature will cease, that we shall no longer be inundated with leaflets, pamphlets, and books, and that the numerous societies established to promote the Anti-vaccination Movement will dissolve into thin air. I hope this may be so, and that is a strong reason why I advocate inquiry, that it may do something to settle the public mind, and the only people, I think, who may look upon the Report with apprehension are Parliamentary candidates. Now they are able to shelter themselves behind a coming inquiry. When a candidate is hard pressed and driven into a corner, he says—"I am in favour of inquiry, and until that inquiry is held I must suspend my judgment." But I am afraid when this inquiry comes off these unfortunate gentlemen must come forth from their refuge and give an opinion one way or the other. In the composition of the Commission I hope the utmost care will be taken to insure an impartial inquiry, else people will be ready enough afterwards to say it was not constituted properly—that it was packed one way or the other. I am talking as if it is to be constituted, and it is "in the air" that it is to be. It should include men of widely varied opinions and different modes of thought; and if we could induce one of Her Majesty's

Judges to assist, that would materially add to the advantage I hope will result. Having gone along so far in a friendly way, in double harness with my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, I must now part company with him on a few points in his speech. We have heard a good deal on the medical side of the question. The hon. Member for Leicester has talked, I must say, in a tolerably scientific and correct way about several important questions that he has evidently studied. He has read Dr. Creighton's article, interesting and ingenious as it is. But Dr. Creighton himself tells us that it must not be accepted as the doctrine of the profession, so we must look upon it as but an individual opinion. Dr. Creighton holds the opinion that the two forms of pox are really the same disease. If they are the same, if the lesser pox is the same as what is called the great pox, why is it that there are so few outbreaks of post-vaccinal syphilis observed in the country? Dr. Creighton, after careful search through medical literature, can only find 17, some of which are admitted to be doubtful in character. If it be really the case that the one disease is the same as the other, why do we not have outbreaks of this form of the disease? Dr. Buchanan—and I am glad to get back to him again—tells us that out of 7,000,000 children that came under the cognizance of the Local Government Board in 10 years, there was not one case of post-vaccinal syphilis, though he was always looking out for it for purposes of investigation. I am sorry to talk to the House in this medical way, but my hon. Friend has thrown out a challenge on these points. I am unable to back him up in what he says about the spread of syphilis among children. He tells us that detection of the disease is a very difficult thing, but I do not think it is. If I were addressing a medical society instead of the House of Commons I think I should be able to give very good reason for saying what I do, and lay down the symptoms and indications beyond doubt. The remoter stages of the disease are now much better understood than they were formerly when effects in children and adults were set down to that disease, but really had nothing to do with the disease itself. The hon. Member has directed attention to the outcome of the Sheffield inquiry, and without doubt this somewhat formidable looking volume contains some of the most valuable information. It is a piece of patient, skilled, and scientific work, for which Dr. Barry deserves the highest commendation—his case hardly breaks down at any point. The hon. Member tells us that the question of sanitation has not been sufficiently considered; but Dr. Barry shows that he has taken note of this, but cannot find that the effect of the so-called circumstances of sanitation upon the death-rate of those attacked is demonstrable. I think if my hon. Friend had continued his investigation a little further he would have found that the condition of things in Sheffield had nothing to do with sanitation, and that among those who suffered from the epidemic, the attacks among vaccinated children were in the proportion of five per 1,000, and among unvaccinated children 101 per 1,000, while the death-rate in either case was ·09 and 44, in other words, that as the result of the Sheffield outbreak, for every 100,000 vaccinated children the death-rate from small-pox was nine, and among the same number of unvaccinated children it was 4,400. I do not think facts could be carried further, and I can only recommend the perusal of this book as entirely bearing out every word of what I am saying. I do not wish to continue my remarks any further, for it is a little inconvenient, perhaps, at this stage, when we are only asking for a Royal Commission, to launch into an elaborate discussion, ranging over the whole field of vaccination. I am afraid I have erred a little in that direction, but I was led into it by my hon. Friend, with whom, to some extent, I am acting. This inquiry, which I am assuming will be granted should be full, elaborate, and comprehensive in character. In a matter of this kind I can place my faith in the judgment of my right hon. Friend who presides over the Local Government Board. We have found him heretofore true and firm against invidious attacks upon the beneficent institution of vaccination. I hope the inquiry will be granted, that it will calm agitation, and add to our knowledge, and I believe it will strengthen the hold on the public mind of what I consider a great and beneficent institution. Hence it is I have great pleasure in seconding the Motion.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): It is a matter of some convenience to the Minister who has to reply on such a subject as this, to find in the Seconder of the Motion for an inquiry a man so capable of answering the propositions which have been put forward by the Mover as reasons for granting this inquiry. The House will see that the hon. Member for Aberdeenshire has taken up one or two of the most prominent features of the speech of the hon. Member for Leicester, and has answered them in a manner that must have been generally satisfactory. I believe that I shall be able to add somewhat to what the hon. Member for Aberdeenshire has said, and I trust that the House will not think I am doing anything unnecessary if I go through the various points raised by the hon. Member for Leicester, and endeavour to give him what I think a pretty complete answer. The Seconder of the Motion has rather deprecated that, on a Motion for Inquiry, the whole field in connection with vaccination and small-pox should be gone over; but it is quite evident that, looking at the width of the field covered by the hon. Member who moved this Resolution, it would be rather unfortunate if the Minister who had to reply did not endeavour, as well as he could, to meet the arguments raised. Whether or not the Government propose to grant this inquiry is not material to this point, except that I think if we were to leave the statements of the hon. Member for Leicester unanswered, it would, perhaps, have the somewhat unfortunate effect of leading the public to suppose that it was because of the strength of the arguments used by the Mover, and our inability to answer him, that inquiry was conceded. Therefore I think, whatever may be the conclusion I have to announce in reference to this inquiry, it is my duty to go over the field traversed with the view of showing that, in our opinion, the allegations of the hon. Member are not well founded. I have nothing to complain of in what the hon. Gentleman said. I know that the hon. Member for Leicester has always taken a great and an intelligent interest in this question; and if the arguments against vaccination were always as temperately put forward as he has put them forward to night I should have no reason to complain. But we know it is not so, and that the minds of the people in the country, and especially of the working classes, is excited by a mass of literature and an immense number of statements which contain false propositions, which pervert facts in the most barefaced manner, and draw a picture of the effects of vaccination to the minds of the mass of the people, which, in my opinion, fully account for the fact that the Vaccination Laws are perhaps regarded in many quarters with a very considerable amount of dissatisfaction. One of the most important allegations made by the hon. Member had reference to injuries and the communication of disease in the process of vaccination. He was able to quote, in support of the view he put forward, a written statement by a high authority, Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson. I will not, for a moment, deny the accuracy of the citation, but I may point out that Mr. Hutchinson himself authorized me to make a reply in this House on that particular point, the communication of syphilis by vaccination, and it is to the effect, that though he had been looking out, and the whole medical faculty knew that he had been looking out, for ten recent years for further manifestation in support of the statement he had made, he had never come across one single case of the communication of the disease referred to by vaccination.

*SIR J. PEASE: Can the right hon. Gentleman give the date of that answer?

*MR. RITCHIE: I have not a note of the date; but I remember Mr. Hutchinson did authorize me to make that statement in my answer.

*SIR J. PEASE: Is it since the date of the evidence he gave before the Committee in 1871?

*MR. RITCHIE: Certainly. I had not the honour of a seat in this House in 1871. Mr. Hutchinson authorized me to say that though he had been looking out during that time for a communication of syphilis, he had not been able to find one.

*SIR J. PEASE: Mr. Hutchinson gave very striking evidence before the Committee of a case which he had investigated, in which a great number of persons were infected with syphilis from vaccination.

*Mr. RITCHIE: That does not in any way affect my statement. Mr. Hutchinson before the Committee made a statement as to what he had seen; but I say that since that time he has not found a single case of the kind.

*Sir J. PEASE: I only wanted to have the point made quite clear.

*Mr. RITCHIE: As the hon. Member for Aberdeenshire has said, the officers of the Local Government Board have not found one single case of the communication of syphilis that could properly be borne out. Further than that, Dr. Cory, one of the officers of the Local Government Board, some years ago made special investigation into this subject, and, with great heroism, endeavoured to inoculate himself with syphilis in vaccination; and although he inoculated himself three times, he was quite unable to produce the disease in himself, and only succeeded after a fourth inoculation. I think the House will see clearly that, if the communication of syphilis is so enormously difficult as Dr. Cory found it to be, communication is not likely to take place under the precautions laid down by the Local Government Board, nor even in the unlikely event of lymph being actually taken from a diseased person. I may say, further, that Dr. Creighton, who has been referred to, distinctly stated, in a letter to the *Lancet*, that he had never contended or ever affirmed that infantile forms of the disease could be traced to vaccination; but in so far as he had contended on the subject at all, he had contended exactly the opposite. I think, therefore, the burden of evidence is distinctly against the allegation of the hon. Member for Leicester. Then, with regard to erysipelas, we have made the most careful inquiries since November last into the cases of death reported to us in connection with vaccination; and it has been found that in some instances, whether by carelessness or otherwise, erysipelas had supervened upon vaccination as it might upon any other wound. The hon. Member for Leicester then went on to refer to the penalties for refusal to vaccinate, and I must say he drew a picture calculated excite sympathy—of persons marched through the streets handcuffed to prison for breaking the Vaccination Laws. I am one of those who would use every legitimate means to compel obedience to the law; but it is a question whether people who disobey through conscientious motives should be subjected to the treatment the hon. Gentleman has referred to. With reference to cumulative penalties, the hon. Member referred to the Report of the Committee of 1871. Curiously enough, the clause against cumulative penalties is the only one of the Committee's recommendations which the hon. Gentleman thinks justified by the evidence; and this one particular recommendation is in accordance with his own views. He is ready to accept it, but all the recommendations that go against his own views he says are against the evidence. I do not think, in this respect, his remarks were of the strictest impartiality. The hon. Gentleman says that a Bill was brought in in 1871 to carry out the particular recommendations of the Committee, and it was carried through the House and enacted into law. Well, as the hon. Gentleman knows, the Bill though the Bill was passed, it was in an extremely small House. Bills have been brought in again and again with very much the same objects and upon every occasion have been defeated. I think there have been something like 60. In 1872 a Bill was brought in and withdrawn; in 1877 the same thing happened. A Resolution moved in 1877 with the same object was defeated by 106 to 36. The Bill of 1878 was defeated by 271 against 82; the Bill brought in in 1880 was withdrawn, as was that of 1882; and in 1883 a Resolution, moved by Mr. Taylor, then Member for Leicester, was defeated by 218 to 16. The hon. Member for Leicester used as an illustration of the hardships imposed by the Vaccination Laws the case of "poor Charles Hayward." I am not going to argue or inquire whether or not these repeated prosecutions are advisable, but what I do say is that the case of "poor Charles Hayward" must not be taken as an illustration of the manner in which Guardians carry out the law. Hayward is a man set up by an Anti-Vaccination Society to fight their battle against vaccination; and although "poor Charles Hayward" has been fined 37 times, he has for a long time never paid a copper. The Guardians have considered that this is a struggle between vaccination and anti-vaccination, and they are determined to prosecute the representative of the latter cause with the utmost rigour of the law. So far, however, as "poor Charles Hayward" is concerned, I do not think he is one whit the poorer from the fines which have been levied upon him. I now pass on to the question of Sheffield. I was very glad to hear the hon. Member for Aberdeen refer to the most admirable Report of Dr. Barry. A more able and exhaustive Report has never been laid before the House since the question has been in debate. Dr. Barry takes account of 6,088 cases and 590 deaths. He organized a house-to-house visitation, and by personal inquiry he has come to a knowledge of the circumstances of every case that was fatal; every case alleged to have taken place in vaccinated children under ten, and every case alleged to have taken place after previous small-pox or re-vaccination. Dr. Barry alludes to some facts demonstrated by the inquiry—namely, that the attack-rate of the vaccinated children under ten was five per thousand, and that of the unvaccinated 101. The death-rate of the vaccinated children under ten was ·09 and of the unvaccinated 44. For 100,000 vaccinated children the mortality was nine, and for the same number of unvaccinated children the mortality was 4,400. Therefore the vaccinated had a 480-fold protection against death by small-pox. Of the children living in the houses actually invaded by small-pox, the attack-rate was 78 per thousand in the vaccinated, and 869 per thousand in the unvaccinated. The death-rate of the vaccinated was one and of the unvaccinated 381 per thousand. Therefore the protection enjoyed by the vaccinated over the unvaccinated was 11-fold against attack and 381-fold against death. There was a similar experience with reference to persons over 10; for every 100,000 of those twice vaccinated, there were eight deaths; of those once vaccinated, 100 deaths; and of the unvaccinated, 5,100 deaths. Then, as to the persons employed in the various hospitals; of 161 persons, 18 had had small-pox, and none of these fell ill; 62 were vaccinated only in infancy, six of them were attacked, and one died. The remaining 81 had been re-vaccinated, and not one contracted small-pox. Then, as to the troops; there were 830 of all ranks, of whom 12 were attacked and one died. The medical officer in charge of the troops informed Dr. Barry that re-vaccination had been attempted with the 12 men attacked, but that in every case it had been unsuccessfully performed. Then as to the police; 10 of them took small-pox, when a re-vaccination was ordered, and no further cases occurred. Again, of 290 men employed at the Post Office, all were re-vaccinated, and during the whole course of the epidemic not one took the disease. The net result in Sheffield was that if the vaccinated children had been attacked at the same rate as the unvaccinated, there would have been 7,000 attacks in place of 353, and 3,000 deaths in place of six; or up to the conclusion of the epidemic there would have been 4,400 deaths in place of nine. But to deal with the number of deaths and attacks alone is not enough. With this loathsome disease those who are not adequately protected by vaccination suffer much more than those who are so protected, and, even if they recover, in a large number of cases the sufferers are left blind or disfigured for the remainder of their lives. Now the hon. Gentleman takes a great deal of exception to figures. He took a certain small area in which he said there were a certain number of children vaccinated and unvaccinated, and the inference he drew was that in all probability the children were too delicate to be vaccinated. I have taken a much wider area than the particular illustration the hon. Gentleman gave. I have taken the whole area of Sheffield, and I venture to say that these figures from Sheffield are of the most conclusive character; indeed, vaccination as a protection against small-pox was never more completely vindicated than it is by these statistics. The hon. Member says that vaccination is not an absolute protection; but he understands perfectly well that for a considerable time past that position has not been maintained on the other side. But I go the length of saying that even in those who have been inadequately vaccinated the severity of the attack is infinitely less than in those who have had no vaccination; and although we cannot contend that vaccination is an absolute protection, the people who have been properly vaccinated, and at the right time re-vaccinated, are, to all intents and purposes, exempted from the disease. The hon. Gentleman went on to say that the average percentage of deaths before vaccination was made compulsory was not larger than it is now.

Mr. PICTON: What I said was that the proportion of mortality was 18·8 per cent in the last century, and it is 18·5 now.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I did not understand that; but, to revert to small-pox, the hon. Gentleman has not divided out the deaths at various ages. If he takes the cases of children, which is the really material age, he will find that his figures are quite fallacious. In 1847-52 the deaths from small-pox of children of five years old were 227 per 1,000,000, and of persons of all ages 326 per 1,000,000; and in 1876-81 the numbers were respectively 21 and 84 per 1,000,000. The average number of deaths from small-pox per 1,000,000 inhabitants at different periods is as follows:—In 1838-42, 576 per 1,000,000; in 1847-53, when vaccination was optional, 305 per 1,000,000; in 1854-71, when vaccination, though compulsory, was not rigidly enforced, 223 per 1,000,000; in 1872, the epidemic year, 821 per 1,000,000; and in 1873-88, when vaccination was compulsory and rigidly enforced, 67 per 1,000,000, or, including 1872, 111 per 1,000,000. As to Leicester, I willingly acknowledge that the arrangements for isolation of persons attacked by small-pox and for the sanitation of the town are everything that could be desired. But the hon. Member omitted to mention one precaution which is taken at Leicester. Not only is an individual who is attacked by the disease removed, but all persons who have been in contact with that individual are also taken away and isolated. Moreover, they are re-vaccinated.

Mr. PICTON: The right hon. Gentleman has made that statement before; but I beg to say that he has been misinformed. I am aware that in some cases persons have been re-vaccinated where they have consented; but if there is no consent there is no compulsion.

*Mr. RITCHIE: No; but I had a communication from the Medical Officer of Health of Leicester a few days ago, and he tells me that though there is no absolute compulsion to be re-vaccinated if the people raise an objection, as a matter of fact, the Medical Officer presses strongly on them the desirability of re-vaccination. Is it not the fact that every nurse in the hospital at Leicester has not only been vaccinated, but re-vaccinated? Therefore, for the hon. Gentleman to contend that there is no saving virtue in vaccination, when such efforts are made by means of vaccination in Leicester, is to put forward a proposition which he is hardly, I think, able to maintain. We all know that there are a considerable number of unvaccinated persons in Leicester, but yet the number is not large compared with the whole population. In Leicester they are not more than 10 or 15 per cent of the whole population.

Mr. PICTON: Yes.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I am told not, and I am bound to say that while the condition of Leicester is at present dangerous, I think that in a few years it will have become alarmingly dangerous. And looking at the large number of unvaccinated persons living in that town, while they are able now to seize upon and strangle the disease when it breaks out, it will be infinitely more difficult to do so when the number of unvaccinated persons has increased—as they will if Leicester continues to pursue the policy it is now pursuing. Whatever may be the result, in Leicester, of the extraordinary precautions taken there, I venture to say that if it were to be assumed, from the successful stand they have been able to make there against the disease, that vaccination may be safely dispensed with throughout the whole of the country, the result before long would be little short of disaster. I ask the hon. Gentleman if he will contend that good sanitation is really a safe alternative for vaccination in every part of the country? Although sanitation is undoubtedly cared for in Leicester, and though the precautions against small-pox are extremely good, I want to know how it is that one of the diseases depending on good sanitation for its eradication is so closely allied with Leicester? I want to know how it is that Leicester has a higher death-rate from diarrhœa than any other town but one in the United Kingdom? I know this causes serious anxiety to the people of Leicester, and I have no doubt that they would be very glad to remedy whatever defects may exist; but all I say is that I do not think too much should be made of the sanitary condition of Leicester. I think I have gone through most of the special points dealt with by the hon. Gentleman. I could, if time permitted, quote many more statistics to show the enormous benefits this country has derived from vaccination. I could show that those countries which have applied Vaccination Laws most stringently are the countries that are the most free from small-pox. I do not wish, however, to detain the House for an unduly long time. The demand of the hon. Gentleman is for an inquiry. Well, no doubt there are some points of objection which might be urged to the granting of an inquiry. To grant an inquiry would no doubt seem to imply, to some extent, that there is a doubt as to the efficacy of vaccination. As far as the authorities at the Local Government Board are concerned no such doubt exists. Every inquiry has demonstrated that vaccination is one of the greatest blessings ever vouchsafed to mankind. Still, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that, in consequence of the strenuous efforts of the anti-vaccinators to distort and misrepresent facts and the undoubted impression they are making on the public mind, it may, perhaps, be desirable to grant an inquiry. Certain questions connected with the operation of vaccination may be usefully inquired into by a body of Gentlemen who cannot be suspected of being tainted with the prejudices of the Local Government Board. Other questions connected with the supply of lymph may be usefully inquired into. The hon. Gentleman has alluded to certain medical theories in connection with lymph which I will say nothing of, and undoubtedly this is a very large question. There is the question of the manner in which the lymph is obtained, the question of its purity, and as to whether it would not be desirable to extend the system of vaccination from the calf. All these subjects are important and might be legitimately inquired into. Then there is another important question as to the manner in which public vaccination should be carried out. I admit as strongly as anyone that if Parliament imposes an obligation on parents to have their children vaccinated, they ought to take every possible precaution to see not only that the lymph used is ripe and pure, but also that the operation is properly and respectfully performed. Every care should be taken in public vaccination as is taken in private vaccination, and in private vaccination as is taken in public vaccination, therefore the matter is one on which there might well be inquiry. Then there is the question of the method to be adopted in enforcing compliance with the law. It is well known that the Local Government Board has never ardently supported incessant prosecutions where there is a supposed conscientious objection to vaccination on the part of parents. I do not believe that in the end these prosecutions do any good. They create sympathy and tend to the disadvantage rather than the advantage of vaccination. Then, again, it is a matter that might be properly inquired into, how far the hon. Gentleman's statement can be borne out that sanitary precautions may be made to take the place of vaccination. There are other points which may ultimately be made the subject of inquiry. The Government have, therefore, determined to appoint a Royal Commission. The Government, however, cannot accept the terms of the Resolution, but they hope that the terms of reference to the Royal Commission will be sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the hon. Gentleman. The Commission will be composed of Gentlemen whose opinions will carry the greatest possible weight in all quarters. The Government have come to this decision, not because they have the slightest doubt of the efficacy of vaccination, but because the state of public opinion requires that a thorough investigation should be made into the whole question. I trust that the conclusion at which the Government have arrived will be satisfactory, not only to the hon. Member for Leicester, but also to those who, not agreeing with that hon. Member, still think that there is ground for inquiry.

*SIR L. PLAYFAIR (Leeds, S.): My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester has attacked the Committee of 1871, agreeing with only one of the conclusions at which that Committee arrived, and disagreeing with all the others. He says that the Committee did not report in accordance with the evidence before them. Now I have sat on many Committees, and have been a

Member of many Royal Commissions, probably more than any other Member of this House, but I never recollect so thorough and impartial an inquiry as that Committee conducted. But 18 years have elapsed since that inquiry, and that is a long time with respect to a question on which there is any dispute. New facts arise and new evidence is brought forward. Undoubtedly there has been a strong propaganda against vaccination among the working population of many of our large towns. I therefore agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeenshire (Dr. Farquharson) that, in the interests of vaccination itself, it is desirable to appoint a Royal Commission, and there should be a full and impartial inquiry. As to the alternative to vaccination which is practised at Leicester, the strength and weakness of that proposal has been well analyzed by the right hon. Gentleman who preceded me. Leicester relies on isolation and quarantine. Quarantine succeeds only when there is a small area of infectivity. But in this country we have given up quarantine altogether, as it has been found impossible to carry it out and keep out cholera and other diseases. And it will be so at Leicester. Leicester has tried the experiment for 17 years, and the hon. Member boasts that for 17 years they have kept small-pox at bay. There is a Continental town the experience of which is more instructive than that of Leicester. In Leipsic during 18 years methods similar to those of Leicester — possibly less thorough in their character—were employed, and from 1851 to 1870 there were only 29 deaths from small-pox. In 1871 there was the great epidemic of small-pox which went all over the world, and desolated not only Europe, but America and even the South Sea Islands. That epidemic struck Leipsic. What happened? At Leipsic 9,600 per million of the general population died of the disease, and no fewer than 30,000 per million of the infantile population under the age of 15. Here there is a warning, but I do not think Leicester will take the least notice of it. It shows, however, that a time came when every precaution and all the powers of isolation were overcome. My hon. Friend began by objecting to compulsion only, but he has now advanced a step and decries vaccination. He has very much mixed the two things up together. My hon. Friend says that vaccination has failed because it has not prevented epidemics of small-pox. But nobody ever supposed it would. It is, however, a serviceable embankment, as it were, which is effectual save in the rare case of a deluge, when all embankments are overflowed, and no one can help the water spreading all over the country. It is not fair to pick out a year of epidemic; we ought to consider what vaccination has done over a long series of years. The mortality from small-pox in the last century was 3,000 per million for the whole country and 4,000 for London. From the beginning of the century up to 1841 vaccination was spread by charitable agencies. This gratuitous optional vaccination reduced the mortality from small-pox from 3,000 per million to 600 per million. Parliament then interfered, and gave money to promote optional vaccination. Optional vaccination began in 1841, and went on until 1853, and the mortality fell to 305 per million. Between 1853 and 1871 the operation was made obligatory, but no efficient method of enforcing it was created. In that period the mortality further fell to 223 per million. Since that time, under the stricter system which is now enforced, the proportion is only 156 per million. My right hon. Friend has been quite fair in comparing six years of optional with six years of compulsory vaccination, ending in 1881, and showing that in the former period the mortality was 356 and in the latter 84 per million. Now, why has not the hon. Member for Leicester given us the figures of infantile mortality? The law does not apply to adults at all. To see its full effect you must eliminate adults, and it will be found that in the optional period the infantile mortality was 227 per million, but in 1881 the proportion fell to 21. Parents have many rights, but they have not the right of committing omissional infanticide upon their children. At present all that I am contending for is that compulsory vaccination has not failed. In the case of children it has gloriously succeeded; and if it were not for popular prejudices it would not be necessary to have any inquiry at all. My hon. Friend says it is true that the mortality of children is less from small-pox, but that adults die in larger numbers than before.

That is quite true, but does not my hon. Friend perceive that this fact completely upsets his idea that sanitation protects the people and not vaccination? Of sanitation adults and infants participate alike, and, therefore, it is not the cause of the decrease of infant mortality. The differentiation of infantile and adult mortality is only due to compulsory vaccination. And now I come to the terrible accusation of my hon. Friend that public vaccinators are distributing syphilis over the land, in proof of which he said that the deaths of babies from that disease in 1847 were 472 per 1,000,000 births, and by 1886 they had risen to 1,822 per 1,000,000 births. In 1847 the registered causes of death were extremely defective. There has been a large improvement since, and I think the fact mentioned by my hon. Friend is capable of an easy explanation. Up to 1847, the registration of the causes of death was extremely defective. Out of 1,000,000 births, 10,969 deaths had no specified cause whatever assigned. In 1886 there were no more than 1,432 unspecified. My hon. Friend, in a very able article in the *Contemporary*, says substantially, though I have not his words with me, "You talk about fewer deaths among the vaccinated than among the unvaccinated, but there is always a *residuum;* you do not know whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated and that *residuum* alters the ratio very much." Well, here we have two known things and a *tertium quid* unknown, which is so large that the ratio is not to be relied on, because it does vitiate the comparison between the two things known. The 10,969 deaths from unspecified causes per 1,000,000 births is the *tertium ignotum*, and it is a large reserve from which to take out the unascertained causes of death. In 1886 there were only 1,432 unspecified deaths, and, therefore, the deaths of 9,537 babies passed from unspecified to specified causes. Thirty years ago, doctors began to distinguish infantile syphilis and were able to recognize it. They had not done so before, and it will be found that in consequence death from syphilis jumped up in a most wonderful way. It was found out what children were dying from, and the cause of death was given. This explains why the deaths from syphilis increase so much in the earlier years of the period of comparison and remain stationary in the later years. There was in reality no increase in the disease, though there was a much better nomenclature and classification. Children are not vaccinated, as a rule, until they are three months old. It is three months, in England and six months in Scotland; and we can compare but we know the percentage of deaths of children from syphilis at different ages. The great proportion takes place before the year vaccinated. Under three months it is 42 per cent; from three to six months 22 per cent; and from six to twelve months only 11 per cent. In Scotland 65 per cent of the deaths from this disease occur before the vaccination period. The statistics, if closely examined, do not support the horrible theory that vaccination is the cause of promulgation of syphilis. It is very sad to reflect that it is possible to innoculate a child with this horrible disease, but the Local Government Board and its medical officers have been looking out for the last ten years, and during that time 7,000,000 children have been vaccinated, and they have never been able to satisfy themselves of one particular case. In 1883 Germany vaccinated 2,800,000 children, the doctors were called upon to report whether any disease had been produced, and there had not been one case. In England and in Germany large numbers of soldiers are annually re-vaccinated, and no case of syphilis has ever occurred in consequence. Let me now say a word in regard to other countries, and give a few statistics which my hon. Friend did not give. They are exceedingly instructive. Germany enacted a compulsory law of vaccination for civilians in 1874, under which children were to be vaccinated under six months and to be re-vaccinated at 12. Previously vaccination was enforced in the Army, but the civil population were not vaccinated compulsorily. What was the result? In Berlin in 1870 the deaths per 1,000,000 from small-pox were 223, in 1886 they were only one per 1,000,000. In the whole of Germany last year there were only four deaths per 1,000,000 from small-pox, and three-fourths of these occurred on the border line, near countries which had no compulsory laws. In Belgium the number of deaths was 194 per 1,000,000; in Switzerland, where vaccination is compulsory only in some cantons, it was 218; in Austria, where vaccination is badly done, it was 325; and in England, 77. I think I have said enough to show that vaccination with us has had a splendid influence over this cruel and mutilating disease. It is as horrible a disease as it was in the last century, when it is allowed to get ahead among the unvaccinated, and it is as fatal as ever it was. Nor is the disease itself one whit mitigated in its virulence. But while I contend that there is no justification for inquiry arising from any failure of vaccination, I agree that it is better to have an inquiry in order that the truth may come out. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman will constitute the Commission with perfect fairness. I believe the result will be to prove that vaccination has been full of great blessings to the population of the country, and that if we are to give up compulsion we must find a better method than the Leicester method of isolation.

SIR G. HUNTER (Hackney): After what has been so well said on this subject I do not intend to detain the House more than a minute or two. I may, however, say that I have had an extensive experience of this disease in India, and am speaking with some authority when I say that I regard an unvaccinated person as a great source of danger to the health of the people. From time to time there used to come down the Persian Gulf vessels laden with persons suffering from small-pox, and I cannot find words adequately to describe the horrible state in which those persons were landed at Bombay. Gentlemen who maintain the views held by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) are continually quoting certain medical men in support of those opinions and views; but just as we see, on taking up almost any daily paper, that Judges differ on points of law, so we need not be surprised to find a class of medical men who uphold the views enunciated by the hon. Gentleman. These are so few, however, that they can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand, and may be described as mere "faddists," who entertain peculiar views, and who manage to keep up, in conjunction with other gentlemen like themselves, the opposition which is offered to compulsory vaccination. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for Leicester believes that vaccination has no connection with small-pox, and if he be really unprotected against that disease, I will challenge him to take up his residence in a small-pox hospital in London, and see what result will follow. I am glad Her Majesty's Government have consented to the inquiry asked for, because I believe that that inquiry will tend to show how very successful vaccination is, and relieve it at once from all the animadversions and puerile allegations that are so frequently brought against it.

*MR. T. ROBINSON (Gloucester): I have always entertained a strong feeling in favour of an inquiry into this subject, and I am, therefore, glad that the Government have assented to the suggestion and are willing to appoint a Royal Commission. I made it my business for several years to invite the attention of the President of the Local Government Board to this matter, with a view to the institution of some such inquiry; but up to the present time we have been unable to obtain this concession. I know that the constituency I have the honour to represent entertain a very strong feeling against compulsion and repeated prosecutions for non-vaccination, and the result of a house-to-house canvass on the subject in the City of Gloucester has been that, of the householders who have returned answers in writing to the questions put to them on the matter, no fewer than 75 per cent are against compulsory vaccination. Since that time the Board of Guardians have abstained from putting the compulsory clauses of the Act into force; so that, as far as we are in Gloucester concerned, this part of the law is a dead letter. There are a great many other constituencies where there is the same feeling; but I am aware that in other places, like Ashford in Kent, a different view prevails, and the law is there carried out in a very vindictive and revengeful spirit. What we feel is that, where people conscientiously object to the enforcement of the law, the prosecutions which are constantly taking place ought not to be permitted, and that the only way in which you can get the country to assent to what it may hereafter be deemed necessary to declare as law on this subject is to have it thoroughly inquired into. There can be no doubt that the working classes feel the existing state of things much more acutely than any other class; for it should be borne in mind that they have no voice in the vaccination of their children and have to accept any medical officer the parochial authority may impose upon them; they must go to the place he chooses to appoint as that where vaccination is to be performed, and attend there at the time he may name; while in addition to all this there is an idea abroad among these people—I express no opinion as to whether it is well founded or not—that there is not that amount of care displayed in the examination of the children brought up for vaccination which ought to be exercised. They do not think that their state of health is sufficiently inquired into, and they are of opinion that operations are frequently performed more on the principle of so much per dozen than from due consideration as to the health of the people. Those who are well-to-do can, of course, have their children vaccinated by their own medical attendants, who fully understand the condition as to health and constitution prevailing among the members of the different families they visit, and these persons can have vaccination operations performed at their own houses and at their own time, so that they do not feel the pinch of the law. Moreover, the wealthier classes do not regard a fine for non-compliance with the law as any punishment at all, whereas a fine of even 15s. or £1 is a serious punishment to a working man, and means oftentimes a good deal of destitution in the case of the poor wife and family, who are thereby deprived of a considerable portion of the workman's earnings. Although a very large number of people object to this compulsory law, they are, for the most part, open to conviction; and if you can convince them of the necessity of compulsory enactments there is no doubt they will be more willing to obey them. They know that medical men throughout the country take different views of this question. They see that the operation of vaccination, when performed on a sickly or unhealthy child, often results either in death or in some permanent disease, and they believe there has been a considerable addition to the different skin diseases in this country since the vaccination system has been carried out. Besides this, the people dispute the statistics that are put forward in regard to deaths from vaccination, and also of the unvaccinated persons from small-pox. On the whole it seems to me that the Government are right in granting an inquiry, I feel sure that on both sides of the House there is only one desire—namely, that what is found to be right and proper should be done. The result of an inquiry by a Royal Commission will no doubt succeed in settling many differences which now exist upon this matter, and also prepare the public mind for any new legislation that may be found to be necessary.

*Mr. STANSFELD (Halifax): Perhaps I may be allowed, as an ex-President of the Local Government Board, very briefly to state the views I entertain with regard to this question that do not entirely coincide with those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Leeds or of the President of the Local Government Board. I begin with this proposition—that the principle of compulsion is one that always requires, when introduced into a legislative enactment, the strongest justification. I have always refused to vote for the repeal of compulsory vaccination, but at the same time I have always declared my opinion in favour of further inquiry. One of the grounds for inquiry is the objection which is felt by a large number of people to the application of the principle of compulsion in a case of this kind. I think this is the strongest evidence not only of the desirability but of the necessity for this inquiry, inasmuch, as the public ought to be satisfied that there are sufficient grounds to justify such a law as this. The strongest thing that could be said in favour of compulsion is that if you give a fair scope to the action of compulsory vaccination it will absolutely stamp out the disease of small-pox; but that ground has now been abandoned. The Member for South Leeds says that you cannot stamp out epidemics of small-pox. If that be so, then you must put the justification of compulsory vaccination on a lower ground than that of stamping out disease. But I go further, without passing any opinion upon expert medical knowledge of that kind, and I say it is evident that no compulsory Vaccination Act which you are likely to pass can by possibility stamp out the disease of small-pox; but I venture to think he would be very bold who should say that the sanitary measures will never have effect. If I know anything about diseases, they have their rise and fall. And to my mind it is perfectly conceivable, even probable, that the time will come when this disease of small-pox, like many still more fearful diseases before it, will have died out under the sanitary influences and the improved methods of life. The President of the Local Government Board has given us materials upon which we may come to a conclusion upon this matter. He and my right hon. Friend (Sir L. Playfair) have spoken about the necessity of re-vaccination. It is admitted that vaccination does not protect the infant when the infant becomes a man, and in order to leave no imperfection in your armour you must re-vaccinate. Will anybody to-night propose to make re-vaccination compulsory? My right hon. Friend would leave the adults to take care of themselves. He wants to protect the infants. If that be the case, then my right hon. Friend abandons the plea that it is in the interest of the community at large. He says himself—

> "I do not do it in the interests of the community at large; I do it in the interests of the infants only, and I leave the adults to get small-pox if they are foolish enough to do so, and to communicate small-pox to the rest of the community."

My right hon. Friend abandons that which in my mind is, if correct, the best justification of the compulsory law. I do not say this is the full argument, or all the *pros* and *cons*; I do not say that this is conclusive as to the advisability of a compulsory law; but I say it is a very strong argument in favour of an inquiry; it is a very great justification of the desire which exists for an inquiry; and it is a reason why that inquiry should be full and free and satisfactory to the public who are most concerned. Now, I wish to refer to two difficulties which came to my knowledge when I was in office some years ago—first at the Poor Law Board, and later in the position which the right hon. Gentleman occupies at the Local Government Board. There is a strong objection in the minds of a great many persons that there is a certain danger to life and health attendant upon vaccination. I do not want the House to be led astray by the argument which has gone entirely upon whether syphilis can be communicated by vaccination. I put that discussion entirely on one side, as far as I am concerned; but I do say that, according to my recollection, when I was at the Local Government Board, undoubtedly the system of compulsory vaccination as at present administered was accompanied with danger to life and health, and to my knowledge health and life have suffered in consequence of that administration. I was exceedingly glad to hear from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that he was in favour of an inquiry into the administration of the law. I think he is perfectly justified in that course. If he believes in vaccination — and I do not suppose he doubts the advisability and efficacy of the law—but admits that other people deny it, then he is right in thinking it justifiable that there should be an inquiry. I think he is perfectly right, and he has not come to a sound and common-sense conclusion for the first time. Upon the question of administration I wish to say a word. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the Commission as likely to inquire into such questions as the provision by the Government of lymph, as to the treatment of persons and children, and the advantage of sanitary regulations. Therefore, he has clearly laid before us a very considerable programme for inquiry by the Royal Commission which he proposes to appoint. Ever since I was first at the Local Government Board I have frequently felt and often expressed considerable doubts as to the present method of administration of the Vaccination Law. The policy of the present administration is to accumulate as nearly as possible the whole of the vaccination work into the hands of a few public vaccinators, who do nothing else but attend to the vaccination of children of the people. They are superintended by medical inspectors of the Local Government Board, and they are rewarded with very considerable sums of money paid out of the public purse. Now I entertain very considerable doubt whether that system is a sound system, and I am glad to think that will be inquired into. Why, I doubt seriously the soundness of that system is that it appears to me to be against human nature. If you get a man from morning until night, every day of the year, to vaccinate the children of the poor, how can you expect that he will be full of care and respect for every child brought before him? I am sure the mind of the right hon. Gentleman will not be impervious to that consideration, and I venture to hope that the Commission will take it into view. The natural process, to my mind, is this: that the vaccination of the child should be by the medical attendant of the family. I am very strongly of opinion that to devolve this duty on a few men doing nothing else from morning to night, and from one end of the year to the other, is a proceeding which begets that carelessness of which I had evidence when I was in the office of my right hon. Friend. Undoubtedly, there have been cases of carelessness. There is the question, of course, whether the child ought not to be examined by the operator; whether constantly vaccinating does not induce carelessness; whether the instruments with which the operation is performed are always kept clean; whether the operation is always performed with delicacy and respect; and whether, if it is not, injury is the consequence to the health or life of the child operated upon. The right hon. Gentleman's programme seemed to me a very satisfactory one, and, therefore, I do not see why he objected to the Resolution.

*Mr. RITCHIE: It seems to me that the Resolution enters into too many minute details, and I think it would be undesirable to fetter an inquiry which ought to be free.

*Mr. STANSFELD: I accept that as meaning that nothing in the Resolution will be excluded, but that the right hon. Gentleman wishes to give the reference in general terms, so that the inquiry may not be confined by the terms of the reference.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I will take care that every branch of the subject and every matter which I stated to-night shall come within the terms of the reference to the Commission.

*Mr. STANSFELD: I think that is a very satisfactory assurance, and, under the circumstances, I am quite sure that my hon. Friend will accept that explanation as satisfactory.

Mr. PICTON: Might I have the permission of the House to withdraw the Resolution I have moved, and may I be indulged with just a word of explanation? The reply of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board appeared to me to be as satisfactory as I could expect from him in his position in matters of this kind. Of course, we must have some confidence in official Gentlemen of great responsibility, and I venture to say that I understand from the right hon. Gentleman that he would, under the general terms of the reference to the Commission, include everything that is mentioned in the terms of this Resolution. He objects to being tied to these terms, and I do not wish to tie the Commission to those terms. I am quite satisfied with what the right hon. Gentleman said, if I understood him correctly, and with that explanation I desire, with the permission of the House, to withdraw my Motion.

*Sir J. W. PEASE (Barnard Castle): I desire to occupy the House a very few moments. Hon. Members around me know how for many years I laboured in this cause, not as an anti-vaccinator, but for the purpose of getting an inquiry which has been refused by Presidents of the Local Government Board year after year. Now that the right hon. Gentleman has granted it, I feel grateful to him for thus recognizing what I believe to be a widespread and popular demand. The great question I have always considered was the compulsory clauses and the manner of carrying out the law. With regard to the compulsory clauses, my right hon. Friend, I understand, is fully ready to include them in the inquiry by the Commission, and also the question of the manner in which the Vaccination Law is carried out. There is a great deal of feeling against vaccination on account of the imposition of accumulative penalties, and no man can doubt that these repeated prosecutions have a very prejudicial effect. I have always thought that the conscientious views of parents should be respected, and I am glad that the whole subject will be inquired into.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): There is one reason for granting a Commission which has not been adverted to, and which constitutes a most important justification of the course adopted by the right hon. Gentleman. I congratulate him on having had the courage of his opinions, and on having looked into the matter for himself, for I feel certain he is likely to have met with very little encouragement from the officials of his Department. I am firmly convinced of the efficacy of vaccination, but it has been administered in London in a most perfunctory manner. I wish, however, to point out particularly what enormous strides have been taken by science since vaccination was introduced. Floods of light have been thrown on the subject, and the scientific aspects of the question have been altered and turned upside down. It was at one time believed that vaccination would give complete immunity from small-pox for a lifetime, but we now know that that immunity gradually decreases and diminishes as time elapses. I believe, if the inquiry is gone into in an unprejudiced spirit, and if the evidence is taken, not only of English practitioners, but also of scientific men from France and Germany, the result of the investigation will be not only very beneficial to this country in dealing with a disease like small-pox, but it will have great agricultural value, inasmuch as it may throw light on the best methods of protecting our flocks and herds.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): Year after year, as the occasion arose, have I endeavoured to oppose the system which at present obtains both with regard to compulsory vaccination, and with regard to the pecuniary penalties inflicted on those who conscientiously refuse to comply with the law. At last I had given up my attempt as hopeless. I desire on this occasion to record my feeling of gratitude to the hon. Member for Leicester for the service he has done in this regard, not only to his constituents, but to the general community of Great Britain and Ireland, and to the cause of humanity. I feel satisfied that, when an authoritative and exhaustive inquiry is made into the whole question of vaccination, its alleged value, and its alleged injurious effects, there will be a great modification of the existing public opinion on the subject; and though the Government are not willing that the Motion of my hon Friend should be withdrawn, I think he may well be satisfied with having obtained the assent of the Government to the appointment of the Commission which has been promised. Whatever the fate of his Motion, the fact remains that the courageous and persistent efforts of the hon. Member for Leicester have at last been crowned with success, and he has thereby earned the gratitude of enormous numbers of people in this country.

*Mr. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I should not have risen to take part in this debate but for an observation made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite in regard to the exaggerated statements repeatedly made by the opponents of vaccination. Now, Sir, I had a letter addressed to me a few days ago by a constituent on this very subject. And, in passing, I may observe that there is a very strong feeling on this question in Metropolitan districts. I am not able to say whether the statements made in regard to vaccination are founded on fact or exist only in imagination; but, Sir, I am rejoiced that the Government have agreed to accede to the request of the hon. Member for Leicester, because an inquiry by a Commission will enable us to ascertain what foundation there is for these statements. Now, Sir, my letter refers to a case of real hardship, and as I have been unable to raise it by a question in this House, as I wished to do, perhaps I may be allowed first to explain the contents of the letter. The writer, an intelligent working man, says—

> "On the 11th inst. I was arrested for non-compliance with the Vaccination Act, and taken to Pentonville Prison to serve seven days. My own dress was taken from me; I had to submit to the prison diet, and when I went before the prison doctor he, as I think ungenerously, attacked me in regard to my views on vaccination. I told him I should be prepared to defend them if I had an opportunity. I asked for books and writing materials, but these were denied me. Oakum only was supplied to me. Seeing that the subsistence of my family depended upon our mutual labour, I desire to know if the Government consider it right to treat one as a criminal, to deny him books and writing material, to dress him in felon's clothes, to treat him altogether as a criminal offender, and to allow the medical officer to attack him as to his views."

Now, Sir, that statement has been published throughout the East End of London and widely circulated amongst the poorer classes, and it is calculated to strengthen their belief in the infamous character of the vaccination laws. I am very glad that the Government have consented to the appointment of this Commission. It is quite as much as we could have expected from them. At present so conflicting are the statements which are made that one is unable to come to a decision on the merits of the case, but the Royal Commission will enable us to see on which side the balance of trustworthy evidence is to be found, and I hope in due time we shall get to the root of this agitation. I should be sorry to stand between the House and a Division, but as so many people entertain conscientious objections to vaccination, it is necessary to have an investigation, and I am therefore rejoiced that the Government have acceded to the rational and reasonable proposal of my hon. Friend, and have undertaken to give us an opportunity of seeing if a real grievance exists in this matter.

*Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): As representing a constituency deeply interested in this question, and especially in that part of it which relates to the compulsory clauses of the Vaccination Acts, I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman if we are to distinctly understand that the inquiry of the Commission will extend to the question of the continuance or abandonment of compulsion. Another question is as to the treatment of persons sent to prison for non-compliance with the Act. I was gratified by the right hon. Gentleman's reference to the hardships and ignominy inflicted on people who in many cases are conscientious offenders, and who have shown no disrespect for the law except that arising from a conscientious refusal to have their children vaccinated. He expressed sympathy with them in being clothed and treated as criminals, and I should like to take this opportunity of asking him whether he will give us his cordial support in pressing upon the Ministry the importance of mitigating the sufferings of these poor people, who are treated as ordinary criminals, and whose treatment in that manner must tend to render the law less popular with the people.

Mr. T. FRY (Darlington): Although it seems almost needless to continue the debate, I wish to assure the right hon. Gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board, of the pleasure which the decision of the Government will give to a large number of persons in my own town. Only last week a gentleman was fined in our town for an offence in respect of which several fines had been previously inflicted, and, however much we ourselves may be satisfied on the subject of vaccination, there is certainly room for an exhaustive inquiry, and I, for one, am exceedingly rejoiced the Government have come to the conclusion to grant one. I myself have seen children in a terrible state, admittedly through vaccination. There is nothing more difficult to understand in connection with this question than the great difference in the statistics, and it is certainly a strong point that those children who die unvaccinated, are probably weak waifs and strays, probably altogether lost sight of and neglected, or admittedly unfit for vaccination, and consequently among the first to catch and succumb to disease.

*Mr. RITCHIE: The hon. Member for East Northampton asks me if I will assist him in pressing upon the Government a relaxation of the existing prison rules with regard to persons sent to gaol for disobeying the law with respect to vaccination. Now, the House will probably remember that it has been stated by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland that it was proposed to consider the question of the relaxation of the prison rules not only in Ireland but also in England. In the statement to which I refer, allusion was made to persons who were sent to prison for offences against the Vaccination Laws. I do not know what steps have been taken. At any rate, it was distinctly laid down that if the rules were altered in respect of Ireland they would be altered in reference to England. As to the other point referred to by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire, although I did not propose to lay it down specifically that the question of compulsion should be referred to the Commission, I imagine that the terms of the reference would not be such as to prevent the Commissioners from reporting any opinion they might have upon that particular subject.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question again proposed.

HOURS OF LABOUR IN GOVERNMENT DOCKYARDS.

*Mr. CUNINGHAME GRAHAM (Lanark, N.W.): Sir, I desire to call attention to the long hours worked in many trades, and to the desirability of limiting the hours of labour to eight in all Government workshops, and of inserting an eight hours' clause in all future Government contracts.

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at Eight o'clock till Monday next.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

No. 16.] SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889. [APRIL 16.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 8th April, 1889.

INDECENT ADVERTISEMENTS BILL.—(No. 34.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

THE EARL OF MEATH: My Lords, in asking your Lordships to read this Bill a second time, I may state that its object is to embody in a general law the enactments for the suppression of indecent advertisements and the legislation in the form of local Acts. It may be said that there is already legislation sufficient to deal with this question, but I think I can show your Lordships that that is not the case. Neither the Metropolitan Police Act of 1839 nor the Act of 1847 touches this question in the least. The result is that it is almost impossible to pass down certain streets of this large city without having thrust into one's hands indecent and filthy publications which ought not to come before the eyes of any decent man or woman. The cause of this is the present impunity for disseminating such indecent literature, and I think your Lordships will agree with me that it is very desirable that general powers should be given to the magisterial body for the purpose of putting in force the enactments and dealing with this evil. At present, my Lords, we have no law which enables any one to take action against persons who advertise their specifics against a certain class of diseases of a nameless character. In introducing this matter to your Lordships, I have to do so under great disadvantages. I have, I may say, one hand tied behind my back, for it is quite impossible that I can bring before your Lordships' House all the evidence I have to show the need of such legislation. Various pamphlets and papers which have been published and circulated might be read, and if in introducing this subject I do so in somewhat weak terms, your Lordships will not suppose that it is because I have not a very good case and a mass of evidence behind me, but simply because it would be quite impossible for me to refer to all the evidence which might be read to your Lordships for the purpose of making an impression on your Lordships' minds. But whatever the difficulty may be, it ought to be encountered, and some steps taken to prevent such inducements to promiscuous sexual intercourse, for at present there are no means of preventing the dissemination of such filthy literature. The only thing that can be done is to charge a person who is circulating it with causing annoyance. My Lords, it may appear very strange, but such is the fact, that a person tendering such a publication can only be given into custody for causing annoyance in offering such a paper or pamphlet, and as there is no law to properly punish him he will only be fined a small sum, which his employer will pay. Literature of that kind is a great evil, and its circulation, I think your Lordships will say, should be prevented. My Lords, what I propose to do by his Bill is to embody the principle of the general law in force under local Acts in particular districts. In doing so, your Lordships will be following the principle of a measure which has already obtained the approval of this House, and I hope your Lordships

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

will not stultify yourselves by refusing the Second Reading of this Bill. The Bill further proposes to put a stop to circulars of a class by which thousands of young men have their prospects in life destroyed. It may be possible that some of your Lordships may think I have exaggerated this matter; but you will hardly say so when I tell you that within a few years a person who is connected with one of the societies interested in this subject has received 20,000 papers of different sorts bearing upon it. They have been thrust into his hands whether he wished it or not. Those papers are thrust not only into the hands of men, but into the hands of women. They are often sent by post, and the persons who receive them, especially young women, are, of course, too much ashamed of having received them to complain, and the public, in consequence, does not hear of those cases. My Lords, I do not desire to detain you at any greater length on this unpleasant subject. All I can say is, I hope you will not consider it unworthy of serious thought and consideration, and that you will do your best to free the country from this stream of pollution, which is contaminating the minds of the young, and which it is, I believe, your firm intention to put a stop to if you can. My Lords, I have only now to ask your Lordships to read this Bill a second time.

Moved "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Meath*).

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I suppose we all most heartily sympathize with the object of this Bill. I do not rise with the purpose of advising your Lordships to reject the Bill altogether, but I certainly should be very sorry to affirm that the Bill, without very considerable amendment, should pass into law. Most of your Lordships are aware of the class of advertisements to which the noble Lord refers, and I entirely agree with him that many of them are obscene and indecent. They are not included in other parts of the Bill, which applies to advertisements of any sort or kind of an indecent or obscene character, though those advertisements are of themselves condemned by the first part of the Bill. With regard to the provisions as to advertisements for treating diseases of a particular kind, although your Lordships will see what the noble Lord meant, I think there is great difficulty in enacting what should be held obnoxious to such a provision. My Lords, just let us see what it comes to, putting all these provisions together. Advertisements which are neither obscene nor indecent, treating of a painful or secret disease—and many diseases will occur to your Lordships which come within that description which are not in the least referred to by the noble Lord—might be sent as a sealed document, and yet the postman who carried it would be liable to the penalty created by the section. It would be no defence to him that he did not know what was in it; but if he conveyed it when sent by post, he would be liable to prosecution. There are, I think, serious objections, my Lords, to the comprehensive nature of the proposed legislation, though I entirely sympathize with the object aimed at by the noble Lord in the earlier part of the section, because, from what I have seen in the public newspapers of the class of advertisements to which the noble Lord refers, there is not one of them which would not come within the designation of obscene or indecent literature, and they would, therefore, be liable to prosecution. The value of legislation of this kind is that it is prompt in its operation, not merely making subject to a pecuniary penalty those who engage in such transactions. I think, my Lords, subject to what I have said as to the Amendments which might be suggested when we reach the Committee stage, the Bill which the noble Lord has introduced might be made a very useful addition to the legislation in the Statutes.

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN: My Lords, I agree that the subject is a most important one. The point is, that the evil against which this legislation is directed is an increasing one. It is impossible to approach the vicinity of certain neighbourhoods in London without seeing gates and posts placarded with advertisements of the description mentioned in this Bill. Things of that kind do an immensity of harm to young people. The broadcast distribution of this pernicious literature has a very bad effect in counteracting the education of the school children. Some 80,000 children go through our Board Schools every year. They go to work in factories and workshops, and in the evenings their only resort is the streets. No efforts of City missionaries, however industrious, can counteract the evil done by literature of this sort. By such means public attention has already been drawn to this subject far more effectively than could be done by any discussion now upon this Bill or any Act of Parliament. I do not wish to trouble your Lordships further on this subject. I will only say that I shall be glad, with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, to assist the measure; and, subject to certain variations which I think would make it workable, I am entirely in favour of its object, that object being the suppression of mischief of a most insidious kind.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I am glad that this Bill has been introduced, and I thank the noble and learned Lord for pointing to very necessary amendments. It is, of course, exceedingly important that in pressing forward measures of this kind no injustice should be perpetrated. At the same time, few people are aware of the underground prevalence of this evil, which may in large measure counteract the good done by education. The child leaving school is supplied with literature of this kind to an astonishing extent. Indecent papers, professing to be of a medical character, are scattered broadcast, and the noble Lord himself must have found that even the recreation grounds with which he had supplied the poor of London were defiled by literature of this character, and thus turned into a propaganda of evil. The country is strewn with these abominable papers. There is no religious Society which operates, by the distribution of leaflets and pamphlets with the vigour of those who circulate these publications. I may give your Lordships an instance which happened the other day: While some girls were taking their recreation in a meadow attached to their school, two men drove rapidly by in a gig and flung over the wall two packages of literature of the most horrible description. Fortunately one of them happened to fall at the feet of one of the mistresses, and the mischief intended was not done. But it is impossible to imagine the mischief that is done by the distribution of this stuff. It is difficult, my Lords, as matters stand, for the greatest efforts on the part of head masters of public schools wholly to check the flood of evil, and summary legislation of this kind would help in the most beneficial manner.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am quite sure that everybody who knows what these publications are must share in the desire that steps should be taken to counteract the evil that is done in this way. At the same time, I would point out that under the second clause as it stands it would be illegal to introduce a copy of "Aristophanes" or "Boccaccio" into a house. Extreme care, therefore, will have to be exercised to prevent abuse of the Act if it passes. That, of course, cannot be the intention of the author of the Bill. It cannot be intended that that should be made a penal offence. I simply mention that for the purpose of pointing out the care which will have to be taken in carrying out the measure.

Bill read 2ª according to Order, and committed to a Standing Committee.

LARCENY ACT (1861) AMENDMENT (USE OF FIREARMS) BILL (No. 30.)

THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: My Lords, I beg to move "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow."

EARL GRANVILLE: I desire, my Lords, to make a personal explanation of a matter of fact before the Motion of the noble Earl is agreed to. Your Lordships will remember that the noble Earl, in moving the second reading of this Bill, gave as the principal argument for it the success of the Garotting Act, passed some years ago. In the course of the Debate the noble and learned Lord (Lord Herschell) questioned the accuracy of this statement. I have referred to the returns for which he had moved, and I would state that it was the arrest of the garotters, and the severe sentences passed upon them by Lord Bramwell, which had put an end to the practice before the introduction of the Bill. The noble Marquess gave a flat contradiction. He states that he was in the House of Commons at the time, and his perfect recollection was that he then stated that the Garotting Act had worked like a charm.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: What I said was that the introduction of the Bill and the knowledge that it would pass into law acted like a charm.

EARL GRANVILLE: No doubt that was so. But I ventured to suggest last week that, considering the great disagreement as to a most important fact, it might be judicious to inquire first and to act afterwards. But Lord Milltown blamed me for not having profited by the notice which he had given in order to study the Bill. No amount of study of the Bill, however, could have made the House anticipate that his Lordship would state his facts under a complete misapprehension, and I cannot help thinking that the old-fashioned and conservative doctrine to inquire first and then to act might have been adopted with advantage. I am afraid of adding fuel to the fire by reminding the House of a conclusive speech of Lord Aberdare, which showed that it was by police precautions and severe sentences that the practice had been destroyed before the introduction of the Bill. I said that Lord Aberdare spoke with authority as the then Home Secretary. The noble Marquess corrected me, saying that Mr. Bruce was not then Secretary of the Home Office. The correction was right, but it did not affect the authority of Lord Aberdare on a matter of fact, as he was Under Secretary for the Home Department at the time. Lord Aberdare regretted his absence last week, and also that public business prevents his being here to-day. He has, however, sent me the following statement:—

> "I have taken several opportunities of exposing the baselessness of the popular belief that garrotting was suppressed by Lord Norton's Act of 1863. The facts are these. There had been several garrotting outrages between January and July, 1862, but in July there was in London an extensive outbreak of that crime, which continued for some months. Successful efforts were, however, made by the police to apprehend the perpetrators, who were speedily brought to trial and sentenced severely by Lord Bramwell. When, about the middle of November, 1862, I was appointed Under Secretary of the Home Department, the crime had entirely disappeared. Nor did a single case of garrotting, distinguishable from the ordinary offence of 'robbery with violence,' occur between that time and six months after, when Lord Norton's Act was passed."

I cannot help thinking that the inquiry as to the facts which I have suggested would not have been unwise, although the noble Earl, the noble Marquess, and their friends decided by a large majority otherwise.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: Will the noble and learned Lord move for the returns which he mentioned on the previous occasion?

LORD HERSCHELL: I propose to do so, and that these Returns should be supplemented by those of a later date. Since the Bill was read a second time, I have looked into the statistics. I find that the Bill of 1863 was opposed by Sir George Grey, on the ground that only two years before our criminal law had been revised, and the punishment of flogging largely abolished. The Home Secretary then deprecated a return to an abandoned system, and pointed out that there were other offences to which flogging was equally applicable, and that it was the activity of the police, long before the Bill was introduced, and not the promise of the Bill, which had put an end to garrotting. The garrotters were punished in November, 1862, and from that time to the 24th of February, 1863, when the Bill was brought in, there was no abnormal number of robberies with violence. I have myself looked into the statistics, and find that they entirely bear out Sir George Grey's statement. There were 209 cases in the last three months of 1863, while in the next three months there were only 164 cases. The statistics subsequent to that year show that from time to time there arose an increase in cases of that class which seemed to come like a sort of wave, and then there came a sudden diminution, which seemed to follow whether the punishment of flogging was inflicted or not. That, my Lords, is exemplified by what occurred at Chester, where, on one occasion, the number of those cases rose to 19, but no punishment of flogging was inflicted, and the number of such cases at the next Assize was two. On another occasion the cases again rose to 19. One punishment of flogging was inflicted, and at the next Assize there was only one such case. If the knowledge that he might be sent to penal servitude for life will not deter a burglar, the knowledge that he might be flogged would not have much effect. In 1862 there were 497 cases of robbery with violence, while in 1887 there were but

326. But cases of simple larceny had diminished in a still greater degree, the number being—1862, 7,104 cases; and 1887, 3,005 cases. My Lords, my view is that the statistics do not at all support the view that that punishment has the deterrent effect which has been suggested, while the punishment is in itself objectionable. Then there are so many other crimes to which it might logically be applied—for instance, violent attacks upon women—that if your Lordships once start on that road it is difficult to see where you will stop. If carrying firearms by a burglar were made a distinct offence for which a distinct punishment would in all cases be added to whatever sentence he might get for the burglary, I think that would have a much more deterrent effect than the punishment of flogging. I think the Bill should be referred to a Standing Committee, and not to a Committee of the whole House.

Amendment moved to leave out "a Committee of the whole House to-morrow" and insert "a Standing Committee."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

The Marquess of SALISBURY: My Lords, I do not propose to go into the historical part of the question. During the winter of 1862-3 there was a very considerable prevalence of this sort of crime, and a very considerable fear of it in London and elsewhere in the country. That is my recollection of it, and I am not entirely convinced that that is not correct by the contradiction of the noble Earl opposite. He took refuge behind a statement that there was not more than a normal amount of that crime. In fact, the word "normal" has just been shown by the noble and learned Lord to be a word of very various interpretation. In truth, mere figures will not give an accurate representation of facts. If it be necessary to look back, the newspapers of that day will show which recollection is correct. The crime of robbery with violence varies so much in intensity that while the figures seem to give one result, the actual practical effect on the population at that time would in reality give a different result. I am glad the noble Lord intends to move again for these figures, because I do not think it could be safely dealt with merely on the certificate of the Secretary of State. What I rose for was rather to point out that we are at one as to the kind of remedy which should be applied to the carrying of firearms by burglars. The noble and learned Lord said that your Lordships ought to add a special and certain punishment in every case in which the robber was detected with them. So far I agree; but that special and certain punishment, if it is to be of any use, must be inflicted at once. If it is to be delayed 10, 12, or 14 years, do your Lordships imagine it would have any deterrent effect? Can you imagine a burglar starting on a burgling expedition saying to himself, "If I go without firearms I shall get 20 years, and if I go with firearms I shall get 22 years?" and do your Lordships think it would make him leave his firearms at home? It is ridiculous to suppose that men who run such risks as these men do make narrow calculations of that kind. But if those men could be made to feel that if they were found with firearms they would get a good flogging immediately after they were sentenced, in spite of all the statistics and arguments of the noble Lord I am convinced it would have a very considerable deterrent effect. The truth is, the noble Lord's ordinarily clear reasoning is turned aside by the prejudice he entertains against this particular mode of punishment. For my part I have no prejudice against it. I want a punishment which will do the work. Whatever punishment is necessary to stop the crimes, let that punishment be applied. But this House should not be stopped by any merely fanciful theory, developed in these later times, that one particular kind of punishment is lawful and another is not. The noble Lord constantly used the words that "we must go logically forward." But nothing is more illogical than the English criminal law, and no system of law in any country was ever successful which paid undue regard to logic. Logic is the most dangerous snare of the Legislator, and the fact that the only criticism brought against the proposal is that it is illogical, is, to my mind, a proof that no real objection could be urged.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: Your Lordships must not look merely at the number of cases of robbery with violence, but at the particular kind of robbery with violence. After punishment had been inflicted on those garrotters in November 1862, the particular kind of robbery with violence did not recur, or did so only in a very small degree. With regard to the general question of humanity I cannot help thinking that some of the expressions your Lordships have heard would correspond very much with the arguments which were used in favour of capital punishment against Sir Samuel Romilly's reforms. Looking at the sentences inflicted, Judges vary exceedingly in their views, and the present condition of the law is therefore not very satisfactory.

*EARL FORTESCUE: I think, my Lords, that too much importance should not be attached to the statistics just quoted against or in favour of the view that the undoubted rapid diminution in garrotting was caused by the Act newly imposing the liability to be flogged upon that crime. For I well remember the wide-spread alarm at the time, and how people did avoid risks to a greater extent, and the number of cases of that particular offence became smaller, not merely because there were no persons ready to garrott, but because those who would have been their victims were more prudent, took more precautions, did not walk so much alone, and wanted more means of defence than they had previously.

*LORD ESHER: My Lords, speaking from my own experience as a Judge for 20 years, I venture to doubt very much whether an enactment of flogging is the most efficacious measure for the prevention of crime. Flogging has been often tried in this country and has been almost always given up. It is a punishment very difficult to adminster; of its severity a great deal depends not only on the constitution of the victim, but on that of the executioner. If a man has a peculiar mode of flogging, if he brings down the lash not only upon the back, but round the stomach, the effect may be very serious. Flogging as a punishment has been given up because public feeling has been wounded on seeing that the victims have died or have been very much injured. It is said that the doctor would be present, but the mischief is often done before the doctor can interfere. There are other more effectual means of dealing with such crimes which have had a very deterrent effect. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Bramwell) is one of the most humane Judges on the Bench, but when he thought it his duty to inflict on garrotters a sentence of penal servitude for life he did not shrink from doing so. I remember, when stabbing was very prevalent, the late Mr. Justice Willes said at the Assizes at Manchester that he would send every man convicted of the offence to penal servitude for life. The result was that the crime disappeared for a very long period. I recollect myself going to Leeds, where it was the habit of some young men not only to rob but to stamp the features of the victim almost out of form with their clogs, and, following the example of Mr. Justice Willes, I said that whenever a man was convicted before me of such a thing I would send him to penal servitude for life. The result was that the crime disappeared. I think the better way would be to insist upon the certainty of a severe punishment rather than the amount. Whenever a man commits burglary with arms the Judge's discretion should be taken away, and the offender should be sentenced, say, to penal servitude for 20 years at least. I believe that such an enactment would have a greater effect than the punishment now proposed.

*LORD BRAMWELL: My Lords, I do not think this is a question peculiarly for lawyers or Judges; it is a question of good sense. Judges inform themselves, of course, of the punishments they can administer, as to which the law leaves them a great discretion. For most offences where penal servitude might be inflicted the punishment varies from penal servitude for life to a day's imprisonment. For my own part I have a very strong opinion in favour of flogging in certain cases. With respect to the logic of it we have flogging administered in particular cases, and therefore the question is whether we might not apply it in the case before your Lordships. These burglaries with firearms, I think, require some deterrent punishment. There is scarcely a crime which excites more alarm, because these offences are committed at night, when people are asleep. I believe that flogging is deterrent. Imprisonment for a long period does not strike the offender in the same way. He has a chance of getting off and of a limitation of the term. When he is sentenced it is not exactly pain that he experiences; it is not something which impresses itself on him; and when the imprisonment is over he only remembers that it was a wearisome life. But if there were something which happened in the course of the punishment which the man considered as pain that would be more deterrent. I confess I would not consult the culprit as to what punishment he would like. He has offended, and the question is what society is to do with him, not for his sake, but for its own. My noble and learned Friend said, "Inflict a punishment of penal servitude for 20 years." That cannot be done. The law gives an enormous latitude in the sentence, and it is necessary that it should. Some burglaries are of the most trivial character. A man going along sees a window that he can open; he puts his hand in and steals a coat or piece of meat. That is a burglary if committed after nine o'clock at night. You could not sentence such a man to 20 years' penal servitude; he must be sentenced to a less punishment. And what a shocking thing it is to sentence 30 men to penal servitude for life. Moreover, when a man is sentenced to 20 years' penal servitude, he is kept at the expense of society for 20 years, instead of having a smart, sharp punishment, which would more impress his mind than a long term of imprisonment. Of the story of the garrotters I ought to know something if anybody does. There was a positive epidemic of garrotting. Two Judges, of whom I was one, went to the Old Bailey Sessions. On my suggestion it was arranged that one Judge should try them all. I agreed to do so. I would not sentence any of the prisoners till I had heard all the cases, and then—and it was the only thing for which any gratitude might be due to me if any was due at all—I added about 50 per cent to their ordinary punishment. The effect of sentencing all the prisoners in a lump—some to 10 years', some to 12, some to 15, and so on—I was told that the terms represented in the aggregate a century and a half—was such as to put a stop to the epidemic for a time. There was not one sentenced to penal servitude for life. I remember distinctly the origin of the Act of Parliament that was passed afterwards—it was when a Member of Parliament was robbed with violence near the Guards' Monument in Waterloo Place. My noble and learned Friend objected that flogging is such a different thing to different people. But so is every punishment, and it is also true to say of every punishment administered to an innocent man that it cannot be undone. Of course, he might be compensated, but that is seldom or never heard of. The worst thing about flogging is that it has a tendency to brutalize the man who administers it, and that it accustoms the public at large to the infliction of something in the nature of torture or violence, which one would rather should be absent from their minds. But although I do not mean to say that flogging is a perfect punishment, and although I see disadvantages in it, I nevertheless think it is a proper punishment to apply in such cases as are aimed at in the Bill. I do not say, my Lords, that flogging is a good punishment, but I do think it is one which would be attended with good results in this class of offences.

*Lord NORTON: My Lords, I agree in the opinions which have been expressed by the noble and learned Lord (Bramwell). According to the observation and experience of highest authorities, flogging is the only punishment for which a man never comes up a second time if he can help it; and, with regard to the objection that it is brutal, the offender is a person of brutal instincts which can only be met by kindred appeal. Whatever may be said by the noble and learned Lord (Herschell), there is no doubt the "wave" of garrotting, however fluctuating before, has very much subsided since the Garrotting Act. I rather think the noble and learned Lord's feelings with regard to this particular punishment arise simply from recollections of the excessive degree in which it was administered in former times; but the abuse of a anything is no argument against the moderate use of it, especially when it has proved to be in peculiar cases deterrent. Lord Esher says it is unequal; but so are all punishments, according to the recipients. It is more certain than any other. There is no sentence of penal servitude that is ever carried out in the terms in which it is given, and every criminal knows that. It is, therefore, a sentence of less form and example than flogging, from a character of uncertainty, and there can be nothing worse than uncertainty for a deterrent punishment. The noble Lord has referred to statistics, but statistics are not always a safe guide. Let me ask whether this punishment has not been successful for other classes of crime? Take the case of shooting at the Queen. That was a crime practised by half-mad persons desirous of obtaining notoriety, and the infliction of a disgraceful punishment for it acted as a deterrent. The same may be said of wanton injuries to works of art. Inflicting pain as retaliation is not the object of this punishment, and the question has nothing whatever to do with humanity either towards the criminal or his victim. The sole question is—"Is it a deterrent punishment for the particular crime or not; are there cases of brutal crime which are met best by it, and from which such criminals are deterred more than by any other?" The noble and learned Lord says that popular feeling revolts from this form of punishment. But why? Simply because of the brutality of floggings formerly; but to say that because there were brutal floggings at one time, we are not to use flogging at all, would be unworthy of this House. When the Garrotting Act was passed, Sir George Grey, in Committee, having despaired of stopping the Bill, introduced a clause providing that the punishment was only to be administered to garrotters by a "cat," of which a model was to be kept at the Home Office. It turned out to be severer than the Army or Navy cat, and this may caution us from attempts to modify a very plain proposal.

LORD LAMINGTON: My Lords, I only rise to make a remark on one point. All who have to do with criminals agree that the one deterrent for these classes of crime with violence is flogging. What has been the opinion expressed by governing authorities on the subject? I remember one of our governors saying that, if instead of hanging they were to administer a flogging three or four times, it would do more than any other form of punishment. I am quite certain it is the one thing which that class of men fear most.

*THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: My Lords, after the admirable speeches of the Prime Minister and Lord Bramwell, I feel that I should be only wearying your Lordships by further continuing the debate. There are, however, two observations which I should wish to make. As to the Garrotting Act having had a beneficial effect, I confess that until I heard the argument put forward in this House I never heard it doubted that the Act was a great and complete success. Surely my noble and learned Friend has had plenty of time to prepare his statistics, but he has not given us any. My Lords, it is admitted on all hands that this growing practice of burglars carrying firearms requires further legislation. No other remedy than that I have brought forward that can at all be called a practical one has been suggested. My noble and learned Friends opposite have given practically none, and I confess I was surprised to hear the noble and learned Lord going back to the extraordinary suggestion of inflicting an additional term of imprisonment to penal servitude for life.

LORD HERSCHELL: The noble Lord is mistaken; my suggestion was that in nine cases out of ten I should not give penal servitude for life.

*THE EARL OF MILLTOWN: I was going to ask my noble and learned Friend how he would frame and act that a person committing this offence shall be liable to penal servitude for life, and then that, in addition, if he be found armed with a pistol or a weapon of any kind, he shall be liable to a further term! How, I would ask, with all his ingenuity, can the noble and learned Lord carry that out by inflicting any further term of imprisonment? Then the other suggestion by Lord Esher was that the discretion of the Judges should be fettered and that they should be compelled in those cases to pass a sentence of a long term of penal servitude. The absurdity of this proposal has been exposed by Lord Bramwell, but the noble Lord further said that some damage of a fatal character might be done by the infliction of this punishment. Well, my answer to that is that this punishment has been in operation now for 26 years and nothing of the kind has happened, and I cannot understand why we should expect greater injury to occur in the future than has happened in the past. One word more as regards the suggestion of my noble and learned Friend that this Bill should be sent to one of the new Committees instead of going before a Committee of the whole House. I do not know whether he wished to persevere in that suggestion; but, if he does so, I should not oppose any objection. I may say that in framing this Bill I have had the assistance of Mr. Poland, who, it will be admitted, has had a greater amount of experience in the Criminal Law than any man at the English Bar. The criticisms directed to the purport and object of the Bill seem to me to be more apt in reference to the legislation now in existence than to the Bill at present before your Lordships' House. The question is not now whether flogging shall be inflicted for certain offences —that is now the law of the land; it is whether a punishment still, as I maintain, has already proved effectual, shall be extended to other and cognate offence which the country demands shall be put a stop to. Having had the valuable assistance of Mr. Poland in drafting the Bill, I do not think fault can be found with the machinery of the clauses. However, if my noble Friend and others with him are desirous that this Bill should go before a Standing Committee instead of a Committee of the whole House, I, for my part, shall not oppose it.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill committed to a Standing Committee accordingly.

THF OFFICE OF HIGH SHERIFF.

QUESTION.

The Earl of CAMPERDOWN, in rising to ask when it was proposed to introduce the Bill relating to the office of High Sheriff, said: At the end of last Session, the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack informed us that a Bill was being drawn to carry out the recommendations of the Committee which was appointed by your Lordships to consider this question, and which Committee reported in due course. I have waited to see whether any measure would be brought forward, but nothing has been done, and I think it is high time that a question should be asked about the matter. If the Bill is to have any chance of passing into law during the present Session of Parliament, it ought to be introduced without further delay. It is quite true that the hardship of being compelled to serve as High Sheriff applies to only a few persons, but the grievance in itself is a very real and serious one, as I know from a great many letters that I have received, and the Committee were unanimous in making the recommendation that a change in the law was necessary.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The noble Lord must be aware that some of the recommendations of the Committee which sat upon this subject are recommendations which may give rise to a certain difference of opinion. However, after having given consideration to the matter, I hope to introduce the Bill immediately after Easter, and the noble Lord will then see to what extent the recommendations of the Committee are carried out.

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS BILL. (NO. 15.)

A Bill to consolidate and amend the Enactments relating to Reformatory and Industrial Schools in England and Wales—Was presented by The Lord Norton; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next.

SAINT GILES RESTORATION (SCOTLAND) ACT AMENDMENT BILL. (NO. 40.)

A Bill to amend an Act to make provision in regard to the restoration of the ancient church of Saint Giles, in the City of Edinburgh—Was presented by The Lord Balfour; read 1ª; and to be printed.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(No. 32.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment; and to be read 3ª To-morrow.

COMMISSIONERS FOR OATHS BILL.—(No. 6.)

Moved, That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House To-morrow; agreed to; and Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House To-morrow accordingly.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 35.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE—A POINT OF ORDER.

LORD DENMAN, in rising to ask the Lord Chancellor if the Bills for ascertaining and limiting the duration of speeches in Parliament and for women's suffrage may not be inserted in the list of Bills in Progress, and re-appointed for an earlier day than the 2nd of September, already appointed for their Second Reading, said: The noble Lord referred to what had passed in 1887 and 1888 — as to lunar months and the continuance of a Bill if Parliament were sitting, until a Motion for rejection was made. The Bill for Women's Suffrage has never been debated, though favourable opinions have been given on it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: The noble Lord has asked me a question. I can only say that there is a Standing Order of the House which at present prevents this Bill coming on until the 2nd September. I presume that Order, like any other Order of the House, is capable of being rescinded by a Resolution of the House; but until that Order is rescinded it must be our guide. With reference to putting the Bills upon the Paper in the list of Bills in Progress, that depends upon no Order of the House at all, but upon practice. As a matter of convenience of Members of the House, Bills which are in progress are printed for the purpose of information. Whether it would add to the information of noble Lords to tell them that there is a Bill in progress for the 2nd September, I leave to the judgment of the House.

NATIONAL DEBT REDEMPTION BILL.

(No. 39.)

Read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House To-morrow; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered in order to its being dispensed with.

House adjourned at a quarter past Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 8th *April*, 1889.

MOTIONS.

PIER AND HARBOUR PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under "The General Pier and Harbour Act. 1861, relating to Boscombe, Clacton-on-Sea, Keppel, Port Ness, Woodda, and Wexford, ordered to be brought in by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 181.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 1) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the City of Oxford and to the Counties of Oxford and Berks, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 182.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to the Isle of Wight, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 183.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (NO. 3.) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Local Government Districts of Barnard Castle and Malton and to the Counties of York and Durham, ordered to brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 184.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (NO. 4) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Long, Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to the Borough of Wenlock, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Long and Mr. Ritchie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 185.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT, 1887 (IMPRISONMENT OF MEMBERS.)

MR. SPEAKER acquainted the House that he had received the following Letters relating to the Imprisonment of certain Members of this House:—

Monson's Hotel, Boyle, co. Roscommon,
April 5th, 1889.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, on the hearing of an appeal at these Quarter Sessions from the decision of a Court of Summary Jurisdiction constituted under "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," Joseph Richard Cox, Esquire, a Member of the Honourable the House of Commons, was sentenced by me to imprisonment for a period of six weeks from this date, to be treated as a misdemeanant of the first class.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
WM. O'CONNOR MORRIS,
County Court Judge and Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the United Counties of Roscommon and Sligo.

Court House, Kildare,
4th April, 1889.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day confirmed on appeal the sentence of three months' imprisonment without hard labour, which was inflicted upon Mr. Dennis Kilbride, M.P., on 8th February, 1889, at Kildare, by a court duly constituted under "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," for that he on the 11th day of November, 1888, at Nurney, in said county of Kildare, being a district proclaimed under the provisions of "The Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887," did with J. L. Carew, M.P., and with other person and persons whose names are unknown, unlawfully take part in a criminal conspiracy punishable by Law at the time of the passing of said Act, to wit, to induce certain persons whose names are unknown, who were or might be desirous to use or occupy farms of land in Ireland, from which tenants had been or might be evicted in due course of Law, not to use or occupy such farms, and that I have committed him to Kilkenny Prison, which is the prison for this portion of the county of Kildare, for that period.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
WM. F. DARLEY,
County Court Judge and Chairman of Quarter Sessions, County Kildare, Ireland.

The Right Honourable the Speaker,
House of Commons.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS BILL.—(No. 45.)

Reported—

[Provisional Orders confirmed]: Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

METROPOLITAN CEMETERIES.

Address for—

"Return of,—(1) The names and situation of the Metropolitan Cemeteries to which the Act 15 and 16 Vic. c. 85, applies; (2) the number of bodies buried in each; (3) the extent of each ground; (4) how much has been appropriated for burial purposes; (5) the date of the first interment in each; (6) how much surface space is allowed for a grave; (7) if burials still take place in what is known as the common interment system, and, if so, how many bodies are buried in each grave?"—(*Mr. Byron Reed.*)

NEW WRIT.

For the Borough of Rochester, *v.* Colonel Francis Charles Hughes-Hallett, Chiltern Hundreds. — (*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

NAVY GUNS.

Return ordered—

"Of (1) Number of new Breech-loading Guns issued for Sea Service between the 1st day of January and the 24th day of December, 1888; (2) Number and Names of Ships waiting for Guns; (3) Weight and Calibre of such Guns; (4) Name of Manufacturer; (5) Dates by which Guns were originally promised; (6) Dates by which Guns are expected to be delivered (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 178, of Session 1888)."—(*Lord Charles Beresford.*)

BREECH-LOADING RIFLED GUNS.

Address for—

"Return of all Breech-Loading Iron and Steel Guns manufactured either at Woolwich or by Private Firms (British) which have been damaged after delivery for Service since 1875, giving classes, and in separate detail: (1) Those that have burst; (2) Those that have "blown out" or rendered breech-piece useless; (3) Those cases where erosion has occurred to such an extent as to render the Guns useless; (4) Those cases where erosion has occurred and rendered re-lining necessary; and the number of rounds fired in each case prior to such damage; (5) Who was responsible in each case for the design of Guns mentioned (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No 52, of Session 1887)."—(*Lord Charles Beresford.*)

GUNS AND RESERVES OF GUNS.

RETURN ORDERED.

"Of the number of Steel Breech-Loading Rifled Guns required for the Naval Service, giving in detail: (1) Different classes of Guns proposed for New Naval Programme, with numbers required to April 1894; (2) Proposed Reserves of Guns, giving their classes; (3)

Guns necessary for re-arming Ships whose armaments are at present obsolete."—(*Lord Charles Beresford.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Acts relating to Lunatics." [Lunacy Acts Amendment Bill, Lords.]

QUESTIONS.

—o—

THE BISHOP OF MALTA.

Mr. BYRON REED (Bradford E.) asked the Under Secretary for the Colonies whether he had seen the account published in a Malta newspaper, to the effect that on a recent occasion the Roman Archbishop of Rhodes and Bishop of Malta arrived at that place on board H.M.S. *Landrail*, and was received with a salute of nine guns from the flagship *Hibernia*, and also from the saluting battery, and upon landing was escorted to the episcopal palace by the Governor; and upon what principle or precedent were these distinctions accorded to him by the representatives of the Sovereign and people of the Protestant Nation?

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES** (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, Toxteth): Since the establishment of British rule in Malta it has been the practice to continue to pay to the Bishop on his assumption of the office those marks of honour which the people desire that he should receive, and to withhold which at the present time would give much unnecessary pain to a loyal community.

Mr. BYRON REED: May I ask another question arising out of the reply of the hon. Gentleman—namely, whether the same distinction would be accorded to the Archbishop of Canterbury?

***Baron H. de WORMS**: I am not in a position to answer the question authoritatively, but speaking from memory, I think the custom of saluting the Bishop is in pursuance of an arrange- dating from 1802.

THE VANDELEUR ESTATE.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how long the Plan of Campaign had been in operation on the Vandeleur estate, in Clare; whether the dispute had now been terminated by an agreement between Captain Vandeleur and his tenants, some 500 in number; and what were the terms of the settlement agreed upon in regard to judicial tenants, non-judicial tenants, and tenants evicted?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I am informed that the Plan of Campaign has been in operation on the Vandeleur estate since December, 1886. So far as the Irish Government is aware, no agreement has been come to between the landlord and the tenants.

EMIGRATION TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (Northampton) asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether 22,749 emigrants landed at Bueno Ayres in November last, and if it is true that employment was only found for 9,536 of these; whether in December 29,235 emigrants landed, and in January upwards of 35,000; whether he could give figures to any later date; and whether the Foreign Office had any information as to the total number of such emigrants without employment, and as to the number of such emigrants unemployed now in the Argentine Republic who are British subjects?

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS** (Sir James Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): We do not know how many immigrants landed in November, or if any considerable number are unemployed. An interesting Report from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires on the subject of the immigration into the Argentine Republic is in the Press, and will be shortly presented. Mr. Jenner has been directed to report upon the question asked by the hon. Member. I may say that in the last 30 years, up to the close of 1888, nearly 1,375,000 persons have entered the Republic from abroad, of whom only 23,000 were of British origin.

GWALIOR.

Mr. BRADLAUGH asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether he was aware that Mr. Henvay, the Agent of the Governor General, on 5th March met the Maharajah of Gwalior, and, in deference to the wishes of His Highness and of the Council of Regency, arranged that a number of the highly-paid Foreign officials should leave Gwalior; and whether he will lay upon the Table of this House any Correspondence, Report, or Memorandum relating to the interview between Mr. Henvay and the Maharajah?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The Secretary of State has received no information from the Government of India on this subject.

THE RAILWAY AND CANAL TRAFFIC ACT.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the President of the Board of Trade whether representations have reached him that, under the proposed scale of charges of the Great Western Railway, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888, the maximum charges, as compared with existing rates, for Class A, cannel, cinders, coal, coke, and culm, will be increased, on a distance of 10 miles, from 11d. to 3s., and on all distances up to 150 miles, though on a decreasing ratio, but making an average increase of 77·8 per cent; and whether he will submit the proposed charges of Railway Companies to a Committee of Experts before any Provincial Order for sanctioning such rates is made?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE: (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): I have made inquiries of the Great Western Railway Company, and they inform me that the comparison made by the hon. Member must be made between existing charges and the proposed new maximum rates. They also inform me that the proposed maximum rates show a reduction on their present powers. I have already made arrangements for securing skilled advice, and, if it should prove necessary, I will obtain further assistance of this nature.

Mr. BARTLEY: Am I to understand that nothing is to be settled until the report of an expert Committee shall have been made.

*Sir M. H. BEACH: I do not propose to appoint a Special Committee upon the matter, but to avail myself of assistance in considering cases as they arise.

TROUT FISHING IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Inverness-shire) asked the Lord Advocate, whether, when the exercise of trout fishing in an inland loch in Scotland (such as Loch Ruthven, in Inverness-shire), to which there are public accesses, has been enjoyed by the public without molestation long beyond the period of the long negative prescription, it is competent to the littoral proprietors suddenly to close the loch and exclude the public unless a large payment is made; and whether the police can be called upon to carry out the intentions of the proprietors?

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Buteshire): As regards the first question, I cannot undertake to give any answer which might tend in any way to prejudge a question of private right; and as regards the second part of the question, the police have undoubted authority to prevent any undue interference with private rights, but the extent to which such interference may be exercised must depend on the circumstances of each individual case.

POSTCARD STAMPS.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.) asked the Postmaster General whether his attention had been directed to the Inland Revenue regulations under which the halfpenny postcard stamp is affixed to sheets of cardboard for private persons; whether it is a fact that the provisions that these cards shall be stamped in London only, and that with a few specified exceptions a London agent for persons in the country must attend at Somerset House, deter traders and others elsewhere than in London from having their postcards privately printed; and whether he will endeavour to arrange that the stamping and official printing shall be done at Edinburgh, Dublin, and other large towns, and that from the country districts it shall be in all cases allowed to send the sheets direct to the stamping office, payment being made to the local authorities of the Post Office or Inland Revenue?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): My attention has not been directed to the subject of the hon. Member's question, and no complaint has reached me. I have made inquiry of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, and am informed by them that the expense of setting up the machinery requisite to carry out the suggestion of the hon. Member in the various localities he refers to would be out of all proportion to the results to be obtained, and I fear I should not be justified in adopting my hon. Friend's suggestion.

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby) asked the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that the annual examination in religious knowledge of the children in the Board School at Snitterfield, in Warwickshire, took place on the 22nd of March last, and was conducted by the Rev. F. H. Weston, an Assistant Diocesan Inspector of Schools; whether Mr. Weston examined the children in the creed of the Church of England, and reported that they acquitted themselves in a highly satisfactory manner, and that the writing out of the Creed was almost perfect, but that the meaning of some words in it was not quite known; and whether such examination in the creed of the Church and the teaching which preceded it, were illegal under the provisions of "The Elementary Education Act, 1870;" and, if so, whether the Education Department will take such steps and make such representations to the Snitterfield School Board as may be necessary to prevent such practices in future?

*THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The facts as given are correct, with this exception, that the Creed in question was rather the Creed of Christendom than one distinctive of the Church of England. I am further informed that no denominational teaching is given with the sanction or knowledge of the Board.

LIEUTENANT GEOGHEGAN.

MR. SEXTON asked the Secretary of State for War whether any communication has been made on the subject of Lieutenant Geoghegan's order to the troops to withdraw from a Catholic church in Clonmel during religious service, either to Lieutenant Geoghegan himself, to the soldiers who obeyed the order in question, or to the soldiers who remained in the church until Divine service was over?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No, Sir.

EDUCATION AT HAUGHLEY.

MR. FRANCIS STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye) asked the Vice-President of the Committee of the Council on Education whether he is aware that on Friday, the 29th of March, the children had to be turned out of Haughley schoolroom in consequence of a Vestry meeting having adjourned from the Vestry to the schoolroom in the morning, although the room would have been at the disposal of the meeting in the evening; and whether the attendances of the children on that day were cancelled owing to their being sent home.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden) also asked whether the School at Haughley was in the receipt of a Parliamentary grant, and by whose authority the schoolroom was used for the purposes of a Vestry meeting during school hours?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I am informed that on the occasion in question the children were merely moved into an adjoining room and that their attendances were not cancelled. The school at Haughley is in receipt of a Parliamentary grant, and I think it would have been better if the trustees had not sanctioned the use of the room in the way described during school hours.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON: Is it the fact that 64 children were huddled together in a small room in consequence of the adjournment? Will the right hon. Gentleman make an inquiry into the whole circumstances of the case?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I have not heard that the children were huddled together in a small room, but I believe they were put into an adjoining room, where they were properly taught.

IRELAND—THE BELFAST RATE COLLECTORS.

MR. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Irish Local Government Board had been applied to the fact that in pursuance of a Resolution adopted by a majority of the Belfast Board of Guardians, the rate collectors in Belfast are to be provided with forms relating to the Parliamentary franchise, which are not specified in

"The Representation of the People Act, 1884," or authorized by "The Registration (Ireland) Act, 1885;" and the collectors are directed to fill up certain columns of these forms, and to serve them upon the landlords or agents of all dwelling houses in the city of Belfast exceeding the net annual value of £4 and not exceeding the net annual value of £9; and that, by an order printed upon the forms in question the Guardians call upon the landlords and agents, by authority of the Statutes above cited, to fill up the forms and return them to the clerk of the Union within 21 days after service; whether he is aware that the clerk of the Union last year informed the Board that the issue of such forms would be illegal, and declined to be concerned in it, and that the solicitor to the Board last year advised against the issue of these forms; whether the clerk is now absent from duty through ill-health; whether the issue of forms not provided for by the Statutes is legal; whether the Guardians who cause the disbursements of the funds of the Union for this expenditure will be liable to surcharge; and whether any person is under a legal obligation to fill up and return such forms?

Mr. MACARTNEY asked whether forms of the nature in question were not in ordinary use in large boroughs in England?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I answer the question of my hon. Friend in the affirmative. With regard to the question of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, which appears on the Paper, I have to say that, dealing with the first paragraph, I am informed that the attention of the Local Government Board has been called by the question to circumstances which, I am told, are noted with substantial accuracy. In reply to the second paragraph, the Clerk of the Union last year informed the Board that, in his opinion, there was no provision for the expense of these forms, and I am also informed that the solicitor for the Board has since taken the opinion of Counsel, who have advised him that these forms can be legally served. With regard to the third paragraph, the Clerk of the Union is now absent from duty, having been granted a month's leave on the ground of ill-health. With regard to paragraph four, I am informed that the form in question is legal. As to paragraph five, that relates to a matter of accounts, which will come before the Local Government Board auditor in the usual way, and I cannot make any statement in anticipation of what he will do. In reply to the sixth paragraph, I am advised that no person is under the legal obligation suggested in the paragraph, unless he, or the person for whom he is agent, is rated, or liable to be rated, in respect of the hereditament in question, or, unless he has, by payment of the rates, even if not so rated, brought himself under the section of the Poor Law Amendment Act 1869, which is extended to Ireland by the Representation of the People Act 1884.

ORIGINATING NOTICES.

Mr. BIGGAR (Cavan, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he was aware that many tenants in county Cavan served originating notices before 1st November, 1887, and have not had their cases heard; and, if so, could he state when such cases were likely to be heard?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners state that some fair-rent applications, which were lodged with them before the 1st of November, 1887, remained unheard in the county Cavan. A Sub-Commission has been sitting continuously in that county for the last six months. In the Unions of Bawnboy, Cootehill, and Bailieborough cases have been listed up to the 24th and 25th of October, 1887. The next list for Kells and Oldcastle will include cases up to the 31st of December, 1887.

PROTESTANT MEETINGS AT RANDALSTOWN.

Mr. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he was aware that a public meeting of the Protestant inhabitants of Randalstown, presided over by Lord O'Neill, was held on Saturday, 30th March; whether his attention had been called to the Resolution proposed by the Rev. R. Trimble, Presbyterian minister, seconded by the Rev. W. F. Garstin, Vicar of Randalstown, supported by the Rev. J. J. M'Clure, Presbyterian minister, and unanimously passed, protesting against a demonstration which took place on Sunday, the 17th instant; whether he had received any Reports from the Constabulary authorities as to the disorderly conduct alleged to have taken place; and whether steps would be taken in future to ensure the preservation of order and the protection of the Protestant population from annoyance on Sunday?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that it is the case that a public meeting of the Protestant inhabitants of Randalstown, presided over by Lord O'Neill, was held on the date named, and that by the Resolution referred to in the second paragraph as well as in the addresses delivered at the meeting, attention was called to the disturbances created on the 17th of March and to the interruptions caused thereby to Divine service. The police report that it is the case the band played through the town while Divine service was proceeding. The police will do all in their power to secure the objects referred to in the last paragraph of the question.

MR. W. O'BRIEN.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Limerick, W.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, when the train conveying Mr. O'Brien, M.P., was passing through the railway station, Newcastle West, county Limerick, on the 23rd ultimo, a number of the inhabitants of Newcastle West, with a band, had assembled in a field near the station for the purpose of showing sympathy with the honourable Member; whether on the arrival of the train some 20 policemen left the station, and, entering into the field where the people were, without any provocation being offered, proceeded to baton them indiscriminately, having first attempted to deprive the bandsmen of their instruments; and who is the officer responsible for giving the order?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that on the occasion in question a large and disorderly crowd had assembled. Some 18 or 20 police were told off to guard the train at the approach to it from the field; the crowd became very violent, and stoned the police, whereupon the officer in charge, District Inspector Wright, ordered the crowd to be dispersed. The Head Constable and two Constables were struck with stones, one Constable being severely injured, and unable to do duty for a week afterwards. No one in the crowd appears to have received any injury. No attempt was made to deprive the bandsmen of their instruments.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Was there any disorderly conduct indulged in beyond cheering Mr. O'Brien?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I gather, from the information supplied to me, that the crowd did not disperse until after violence had been displayed by the police.

MR. FLYNN: That was not so.

THE POLICE AT CLONGOREY.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Irelend whether it was a fact that the day before the recent burning of tenants' houses at Clongorey, in the county of Kildare, District Inspector Loch went round to all the houses referred to in company with the agent of the landlord and told him which houses might be left standing as fit to be occupied by policemen, and which might be burned and levelled to the ground as unfit for occupation by the police; wether it is a fact that in one of the houses oil had been kept for several weeks to the knowledge and under the protection of the police on guard there, for the purpose of setting fire to the houses when all the evictions were completed; and whether there were any police at Clongorey on the night of 27th March, in addition to those set to guard the emergency men stationed in the evicted houses; and, if so, for what purpose?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: County-inspector Loch reports that it is not the case that he or any other member of the police force went round all or any of the houses referred to in company with the agent as alleged, nor had any of the police anything to say either to the agent or anybody else as to what houses might be left standing or what houses destroyed. It is equally without foundation that oil or any other material for the destruction of the house was kept in any house or place under the protection or with the knowledge of the police; and, as a matter of fact, it appears that no oil was used in the burnings. There were no police in Clongorey on the night of the 27th of March in addition to those protecting the caretakers.

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Mid) : Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that petroleum was stored in the house where the police were ? I saw it there myself.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is to be distinctly understood that, so far as the police were aware, no explosives were kept under their protection, or stored with their knowledge.

Dr. TANNER : I should like to understand from the right hon. Gentleman whether he really persists in the statement that a cask of petroleum was not kept in one of these houses with the knowledge of the police ? I repeat that I saw it myself.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR : I stated with extreme explicitness that no petroleum was stored in any of the houses with the knowledge of the police, under their protection.

EMERGENCY MEN AND BOYCOTTING.

Mr. CLANCY asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it was a fact that on Saturday, March 30th, an "emergency man" and two policemen visited the establishments of two or three prominent Nationalist shopkeepers in the town of Newbridge, county of Kildare, and presented orders for food, at prices fixed by themselves, and not accepted by the traders in question; and whether the object of this proceeding was to lay the foundation for a prosecution for boycotting; and, if so, whether it will be brought to the notice of the Attorney General for Ireland, with a view to the institution of a prosecution against the emergency men and police referred to for intimidation ?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the facts are not accurately represented in the question. An emergency man did visit the establishments of three licensed publicans on the day named. At one of the establishments he was informed that he would not get the provisions for the sum of 10s. tendered by him; at the next he was told that the bread and groceries were engaged; and at the next he refused to take the goods, as he considered the prices extortionate. But it is not the case that any prices were fixed by the police, nor had they anything to say to the matter, their presence being merely due to the fact that they were engaged in affording the man personal protection. The man does no appear to have expressed any object fo asking for the goods in question, no was there any intimidation practised by emergency men or police in the matter.

WEDDING RINGS.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth) asked the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the case of "Buckley *v.* Alexander," tried at the recent Birmingham Assizes, in which the defendant, a jeweller at Southampton, was fined in the mitigated penalty of £60 and costs for selling rings, now decided to be wedding rings, without being hall-marked and without paying the duty of 17s. per ounce, he is aware that several witnesses of high standing swore that the rings in question were not wedding rings, and that the Assay Master of Edinburgh swore not only that, in his judgment, they were not wedding rings, but that under no circumstances would he have marked such rings as wedding rings if presented at the Edinburgh Assay Office for assay; whether he is aware that thousands of similar rings are scattered throughout the stocks of the 15,000 licensed dealers throughout the United Kingdom; whether, under such circumstances and such conflicting evidence, Her Majesty's Government will remit the fine inflicted on Alexander, and also direct that, pending the decision of Her Majesty's Government with regard to the abolition of the Plate Duties, and to the principle of compulsion as applied to the practice of hall-marking of gold and silver plate and plain gold rings, no further prosecutions shall be instituted until further notice is given; and, whether, seeing that, by "The Revenue Act, 1884," certain foreign plate was exempted from the compulsory obligation of assay in the United Kingdom, Her Majesty's Government will concede the same principle to the manufacturers of this country, with a view to encourage the exportation of British wares to foreign countries ?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): I must remind the hon. Member that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already informed him that the definition of a wedding ring seems to be a question peculiarly fitted for a jury to decide. He sees no reason to dispute their decision or to go into the evidence upon which it was based. He has no information which would show the number of plain gold rings in the United Kingdom. He sees no reason which would justify the interference of the Government in a prosecution which was not instituted by a Government Department at all; and he fears he cannot accede to the demands of the hon. Member.

IRELAND—ARTERIAL DRAINAGE.

Mr. MACARTNEY asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he could now state when he proposes to introduce the Bills dealing with the arterial drainage of Ireland; and whether he proposes to introduce this Session any measures to carry out the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Irish Public Works?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it would be for the public convenience if the Bills referred to were introduced before Easter, and I will endeavour to introduce them; but I am afraid it will be impossible to do so if it is desired to have a preliminary discussion on the introduction of the Bills. I hope to introduce another Bill dealing with a further portion of the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman state whether he proposes to refer the Bills to a Select Committee?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I think it will be necessary to refer them to a Hybrid Committee.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): Is it the object of one of the Bills to open out railways?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The additional Bill referred to will deal with railways.

FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked whether, in view of the fact that the Animals (Amendment) Order of 1st March 1889 was passed before the Privy Council were aware of the prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease into Germany; that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is separated from Germany by a frontier of very considerable length, across which, in spite of all precautions, the disease may be conveyed; and that the importation of animals from the Netherlands under present circumstances cannot fail to increase the risk of re-introducing foot-and-mouth disease into the United Kingdom, the Government will consider the propriety of rescinding or suspending the Order in question, which provides for the admission of animals from the Netherlands into the interior of this country without being subject to slaughter or to quarantine?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand): The Privy Council have every confidence that the regulations for preventing the importation of disease from Germany into Holland are sufficient for the purpose and afford reasonable security; but as considerable apprehension seems to exist among the agricultural classes in this country on the subject, the Government propose to ask the Royal Agricultural Society to appoint some person or persons to proceed to Holland in order to satisfy themselves on the subject. If the Royal Agricultural Society adopt the suggestion, the Government will be prepared to make the necessary application to the Dutch Government, and also to provide the requisite professional assistance.

COST OF NAVAL ORDNANCE.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston) asked the First Lord of the Admiralty what amount was spent on the Naval Ordnance Vote between 7th December, at which date only £697,000 had been expended, and 31st March, the end of the financial year?

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): According to the latest Returns, the amount actually expended under the Naval Ordnance Vote up to the 7th of December last was £901,000. The expenditure for the whole year cannot yet be accurately stated, but it is considered that it will not fall far short of the total Estimate—namely, £1,863,500.

GUERILLA WARFARE IN THE SOUDAN.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy) asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if it is true that the authorities at Suakin are still, under the name of "reconnoitering," carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Soudanese at a considerable distance from Suakin, plundering private property and stopping trade, and that they have lately captured 30 camels loaded with general merchandize, principally English stuffs, said to be brought from Jedda?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The instructions under which the authorities at Suakin are acting will be found at pages 25, 26, and 41 of Egypt, No. 1, 1889, which has just been presented. The latest Report from Suakin, dated March 14th, was to the effect that all was quiet. If caravans have been captured recently, they were probably laden with contraband, or supplies for the Dervish force, but no news of such captures have reached the Foreign Office. As long as the followers of the Khalifa maintain their attitude of hostility, the Egyptian authorities cannot be expected to refrain from efforts to intercept supplies, which are likely to be used for the purpose of renewed attack.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: May I ask if English stuffs and ordinary corn are contraband of war even in the Soudan?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: If they are intended for forces which are engaged in hostile operations against Egypt, I do not think the Egyptian Government are to be blamed for stopping them.

OVERHEAD WIRES.

Sir G. CAMPBELL asked the President of the Local Government Board if the Government proposed to take any steps to enable local authorities to deal effectively with overhead wires?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have communicated with my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, to whom the question ought to have been addressed, and he authorizes me to say that the Board of Trade are now considering what regulations in reference to the matter it is in their power to make. I may say that no power can be given to the local authorities without legislation, and the Government do not at present propose to bring in a Bill.

CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONS.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton) asked the Secretary to the Treasury if he would undertake, before asking the House to vote for the first time any Civil Service pension exceeding £100 per annum, to circulate the particulars of the case, and to state whether the person retiring has, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, given his whole time to the public service?

Mr. JACKSON: If the hon. Member will look at the Estimates for superannuation and retired allowances (Class VI., Vote 1), he will see that his views have been anticipated for many years as regards the submission to Parliament of the particulars of all cases in which a pension is voted for the first time. As regards the second part of his question, I need only say that except in special cases, such as injury, no retired allowance is granted unless, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the holder of the office has given his whole time to the public service.

IRELAND—AN EVICTION BATTERING RAM.

Mr. JOHN MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Inspector General of Constabulary, or, if not, what other authority in Dublin, ordered or sanctioned the dispatch to Letterkenny of an iron-hooped, spiked, battering ram, along with boat-hooks, chains, ropes, shod poles, crowbars, picks, sledges, and scaling ladders; and under what Vote the charges for these engines will come before the House?

*Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that no special orders from headquarters were issued for this occasion. In the opinion of the Irish Government it is desirable, in cases where houses are illegally fortified, and occupied by rioters engaged in resisting the officers of the law, that effectual means should be taken for promptly overcoming the obstacles erected by the tenants, in order that the limbs and lives of the policemen engaged may not suffer any unnecessary risk. If the cost comes on the Votes at all, as I imagine it will, it will be on the Police Vote.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not quite know what the right hon. Gentleman means by saying that no special orders were issued. I presume that extraordinary machines of this kind could not have been provided and supplied without special orders. I must really press him to answer this question. In what sense can a battering ram and machinery of this elaborate character be used for protective purposes?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I presume the orders in this case were issued by the Divisional Commissioner; and, as I have stated, they are in accordance with the principles laid down by the Irish Government. If the police are to be kept in fear of stones and hot water, if they are to be attacked by pitchforks and every species of weapon, surely they may adopt the best means to overcome illegal resistance. They are exposed to great risks, and the shorter you make these operations the more effectually you protect the lives of those who, after all, are only doing their duty.

MR. J. MORLEY: I quite assent to what the right hon. Gentleman has said as to the necessity for protecting the police; but I do not see the need of a battering ram for that purpose; and I would ask whether it could be used for any purpose but that of destroying the cottages of the tenants, and whether that is work which the police are called upon to do?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman follows with sufficient closeness the accounts of the perfectly disgraceful transactions that have occurred at recent Irish evictions, and he will therefore know that in the case of these evictions the police have been subjected to very great risks. The risks are proportionate to the length of the proceedings, and therefore everything should be done to expedite the proceedings and diminish the risks to all concerned.

MR. J. MORLEY: I agree to what the right hon. Gentleman has said as to the necessity of protecting the police; but are the police to pull down the houses of tenants who are being evicted?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If they contain rioters I conceive it would be the duty of the police.

MR. MAC NEILL: I wish to know how the Chief Secretary reconciles his present answers with the statement he made a day or two ago in reference to these said evictions—that the police were only employed to protect the bailiffs and emergency men?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I conceive that the two answers are in perfect harmony.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to know whether these engines are to be brought by the police to all evictions, and particularly if they are to be employed to evict the families now awaiting eviction on the estates of *aides-de-camp* of Dublin Castle?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I conceive that no general rule can or ought to be laid down on the subject. This kind of implement is necessary chiefly in the case where the tenants put up what I may call elaborate fortifications in order to resist legal process.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin, Co., N.): I have to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the resistance has not been offered to the bailiffs of the landlords, and not to the police; and whether he can deny that the resistance has in every case been abandoned the moment the police came on the scene?

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I could not imagine that such a question would be put to me in this House by an hon. Member who has followed the course of these proceedings. I am not aware of a single case where elaborate resistance to the bailiffs was abandoned when the police appeared upon the scene.

MR. CLANCY: I can state that it was abandoned in every case in Donegal.

WALES AND THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

MR. THOMAS ELLIS (Merionethshire): I have to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will grant the Return relating to the income and grants in Wales of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam,: I learn from the Ecclesiastial Commissioners that they have no objection to granting such a Return with respect to the year 1888 alone.

IRELAND—PRISON ADMINISTRATION.

MR. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can now communicate the names of the Commissioners to inquire into prison treatment, and the terms of the directions upon which they are to act?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry to say I cannot yet give the right hon. Gentleman a more satisfactory answer. Negotiations are proceeding for the appointment of a Chairman of the Committee, but have not yet been brought to a successful conclusion.

Mr. SEXTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman also inform the House whether the acceptance of these rules will be discretionary, and will he indicate the principles on which they will be enforced, and will he intimate to prison officials the force to be given to the rules?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The general principles on which the rules will be enforced are pretty much as was laid down in the recent debate on the Bill affecting the treatment of so-called political prisoners in Ireland. If, however, the right hon. Gentleman will put a question on the Paper, I will answer it on Monday.

FATHER FARRELLY.

Mr. SEXTON: I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, after the County Inspector of Constabulary in Wicklow had received and left unanswered the letter of the Rev. Lawrence Farrelly, declaring his readiness to submit to arrest, the Constabulary held the warrant unexecuted for several weeks, during which the reverend gentleman might have been arrested any day at his house or in the streets of Arklow; why, having so acted, the Constabulary visited his house at five a.m. and broke into it; why, having done this, they afterwards allowed the reverend gentleman, without arrest and without a police guard, to travel from Arklow and surrender himself at Wexford Gaol; and whether the warrant to arrest empowered the police to break into the house; and, if so, what provision of Law authorized the exercise of such a power in a case of misdemeanour?

***Mr. A. J. BALFOUR**: I understand that though the letter was sent, the reverend gentleman afterwards changed his mind on the subject, and when the police went to his house they found it barricaded. They went to the house at an early hour in the morning, because they thought there was then the least risk of disturbance. I am advised that the action of the police in entering the house has its legal authority in Common Law.

EXTRA DUTY IN THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I wish to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the fact that the extra duty performed in the Post Office Savings Bank for the year 1888-9 exceeded the amount allotted for this purpose in the Estimates by nearly £6,000, he will state from what source the excess has been paid; and whether the reason for so large a discrepancy in this and previous years between the sums voted by this House for extra duty in the Post Office Savings Bank and the sums actually paid is to be found in the refusal to grant the increase of staff recommended each year by the Comptroller in connection with the Estimates as submitted by him; and, if not, on whose responsibility was the Estimate for 1888-9 fixed at so low a figure?

***Mr. RAIKES**: The excess referred to can be met out of savings under other sub-heads of the Vote. A very large increase of business has arisen from the closing of a number of old saving banks. Representations have been made by the Comptroller of the Savings Bank from time to time recommending an increase of staff. These representations have been partly met in various ways, but the whole question is engaging the attention of the Government, and I hope that a decision may shortly be arrived at. Meanwhile, I have within the last ten days provisionally assigned 15 additional clerks to the Savings Bank Department in order to relieve the pressure of work. The responsibility for the figures in the Estimates rests on Her Majesty's Government.

SWAZILAND.

Mr. ALEXANDER M'ARTHUR (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government has received a Petition from King Umbandine asking that Swaziland may be placed under British protection, in accordance with promises said to have been made to him by Sir Evelyn Wood at the time of his rendering assistance to the British forces during the Secocœni War; whether in view of the persistent and increasing efforts made by agents of the South African Republic to establish complete control over the affairs of Swaziland, the Government is now prepared to oppose this violation of the Convention of 1884, which has hitherto been alleged as a reason for refusing any protection to Umbandine and his people against Boer aggressions; and whether Her Majesty's Government acquiesce in the project of the Transvaal Government for obtaining possession both of Swaziland and of Amatongaland, in order to obtain a frontage on the Indian Ocean, and thus entirely to cut off all land communication between Natal and the districts in South-Eastern Africa north of Zululand?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Her Majesty's Government have not received a petition praying that Swaziland may be placed under British protection; but the whole subject of Swaziland is at present engaging their most serious attention.

THE GOLD COAST.

MR. ALEXANDER M'ARTHUR: I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Ballah Cobbinah, Nassadseneh, and Akoto Mamlay, the last-named said to be an old woman 80 years of age, who at the Gold Coast last August were tried and acquitted on the charge of murdering Assistant Inspector Dalrymple, and who were thereafter committed to Elmina Castle under a special Ordinance "for the detention and deportation of certain political prisoners" passed by the Legislative Council, are still in prison; whether the Ordinance referred to has been approved by Her Majesty's Government; and, if so, whether he will acquaint the House with the circumstances under which these proceedings were taken and sanctioned; and when Parliament will be supplied with Correspondence subsequent to that contained in Parliamentary Paper, C. 5615, which may be expected to throw light on this and other matters growing out of the Tavieve expedition of last June?

BARON H. DE WORMS: The answer to the first and second paragraphs of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. It was considered necessary for the public safety that these persons should not be allowed to return to Tavieve. They were the prime movers in arranging and carrying out the murders at Chiavi, which necessitated the sending of the Tavieve expedition, with a view to the prevention of a general civil war throughout the whole of Crepee. There is no correspondence subsequent to that contained in Blue Book, C. 5,615, relating to the affairs of Tavieve or the expedition of June last.

THE STRAFFORD MAIN COLLIERIES.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a Memorial from the miners employed at the Strafford Main Collieries, Dodworth, Yorkshire, which alleges that two miners lost their work in consequence of complaining of a bad and dangerous underground travelling road; whether it is a fact that these two miners, along with other miners, complained to the manager of the colliery, and to the Inspector of Mines for the district, and that immediately after this these men were under notice to leave their employment; whether he is aware of the fact that the Inspector, Mr. Wardell, was asked to intervene, and that he did make an *ex parte* inquiry, after which he refused to take further action; and, considering the importance of this matter, whether he will accede to the men's prayer, and order an inquiry to be made into the facts of the whole case by the Chief (or senior) Inspector of Mines, Mr. Joseph Dickenson?

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The Inspector informs me that he did not know the men who were deputed to lay before him the complaints of the miners; and the manager of the mine asserts that he did not know that the two men since dismissed formed part of the deputation. Mr. Wardell had the mine examined by his assistant, and met a deputation of the miners without the presence of the manager. After this inquiry he procured an alteration in the travelling roads, and received the thanks of the Miners' Association for his action in the matter. I cannot direct an inquiry into the causes of the dismissal of the two miners. That is a matter of contract with which I have no power to interfere. That was the only ground on which Mr. Wardell, who is an able and experienced Inspector, refused to take further action.

THE COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1887—WEIGHING CLAUSES.

Mr. PICKARD: I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a Petition from the Better Bed miners of the Bowling Coal and Iron Company, Bradford, Yorkshire, again praying that the Weighing Clauses of "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," be put into operation; and, if so, whether he will instruct the Mines Inspector for the district to see that Clauses 12, 13, and 14, are applied and carried out at this firm at once.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have received a Petition from certain miners of the Bowling Coal and Iron Company, asking for the enforcement of Section 12 of the Coal Mines Act, 1887, and I have directed the Inspector to make full inquiry as to the circumstances of the colliery and the wishes of the men. When I receive his Report I shall be in a position to decide whether the exemption at present enjoyed by this Company ought to be revoked.

WELSH TITHE COLLECTIONS.

Mr. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire): I wish, Sir, to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an application was made by the Chief Constable of Cardiganshire to the Swansea Town Council for the loan of mounted police for the purpose of assisting at tithe collections; and whether such application was made before or after the 16th of March, the date on which information as to the intention of the peasants in the parish of Penbryn to ill-use the bailiffs was given to the Chief Constable by the Superintendent of Police?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I am informed by the Chief Constable that such an application was made. The correspondence took place previously to the 16th of March. Though the Swansea Town Council placed mounted constables at the disposal of the Chief Constable, he did not make use of them at any time.

Mr. BOWEN ROWLANDS: Will the right hon. Gentleman say how he reconciles this with his previous answer, that no application was made for the constables until after the 16th March, when the Superintendent gave information that the people intended to resist the police?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The correspondence, as I understand, took place prior to the 16th March, and the application was renewed after the 16th March.

Mr. BOWEN ROWLANDS: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will make inquiries as to how it is that statements on this subject sent to the Home Office are so irreconcilable.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Vice Chamberlain whether, in view of the fact that the cow sold by auction in Carlisle was knocked down to the first bidder for £3 10s., a sum manifestly below her value if sound, he will direct an inquiry, independent of the local veterinary authorities, into the circumstances of the case?

Dr. TANNER (Cork, Mid): Before the question is answered, I should like to ask is it not a fact that the cow in question was a bull?

THE FACTORY ACTS—CERTIFYING SURGEONS IN FACTORIES.

Mr. ADDISON (Ashton-under-Lyne): I wish to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has considered the representations made to him by the important deputations from Lancashire and Yorkshire of both masters and men in favour of dispensing with the office of certifying surgeons in factories; and whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill upon the subject in the present Session?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The representations referred to by my hon. and learned Friend have been under my consideration; and I hope to be able to introduce a Bill amending the Factory Acts this Session, and I will take that opportunity of stating the decision of the Government on the subject.

THE IMPORTATION OF DISEASED CATTLE.

Mr. HUBBARD (Bucks, N.): I beg to ask the Vice Chamberlain who are the officials on whose information the Privy Council rely, when they prohibit or allow the landing of animals from foreign countries; how often in each year such officials report to the Home

Government on the sanitary condition of the animals of the foreign country to which they are accredited; and what was the tenour and date of the last Report from Germany, in consequence of which the four cargoes of sheep, suffering from foot-and-mouth disease, were recently landed at Hull, Grimsby, Hartlepool, and Deptford?

THE VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Viscount LEWISHAM, Lewisham): The Privy Council receives information of outbreaks of disease from Foreign Governments, and also from British Consuls. From countries in which contagious disease exists Reports are sent every month, but the British Consuls are required to telegraph immediately on receiving information of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease. Information of the discovery of foot-and-mouth disease at Hamburg was received from the German Embassy, and was accompanied by the statement that the export of sheep from Hamburg had been stopped by the Hamburg authorities. Before, however, the disease was detected in Hamburg, some diseased sheep had been shipped and were on their way to this country.

COLONIAL CONSTITUTIONS.

MR. FRANCIS STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies why it is that no replies in connection with the Return issued last month relating to Colonial Constitutions were received from Canada or from Tasmania, although the Circular Letter to Colonial Governors was sent on the 26th of March 1888; and whether the Colonial Office took proper steps to expedite the sending of replies from those two Colonies?

BARON H. DE WORMS: I am unable to say why Canada and Tasmania have not replied to the Circular of 26th March 1888; but they were reminded, and a reply pressed for, in a despatch dated 18th December 1888. I may add that accounts of the Constitutions of Canada and Tasmania will be found in the Colonial Office List.

BARRY LINKS ARTILLERY RANGE.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if the Government have abandoned the Artillery land range at Barry Links; and, if so, will they allow the guns and Government stores to be sent to Irvine land range of 2,000 yards, secured by lease of seven years; and if the cost of sending the Militia Artillery Corps into camp at Irvine will be less than sending them to Barry?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The Government have not abandoned the artillery range at Barry Links, but they have not, up to the present time, been able to arrange with Lord Dalhousie's tutors for its use, the rent demanded being, in the opinion of the War Department, excessive. Pending further consideration of this point, it is not at present contemplated to send the guns and stores to Irvine. The cost of sending the Eastern regiments of Scottish Artillery Militia to Irvine would be greater than that of sending them to Barry.

MR. MARK STEWART: In the event of the Government not being able to secure the range, will the Government be willing to send the guns and stores to the Irvine land range?

*MR. STANHOPE: The hon. Member must not press me on that point. The whole matter is awaiting decision.

THE TITHE RENT-CHARGE BILLS.

MR. BYRON REED (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Tithe Rent-charge Bills will be introduced; and whether Her Majesty's Government, if they deem it difficult to carry the Bills of last year during the present Session, will be prepared to bring in a short Bill to facilitate the simple recovery of unpaid Tithe Rent-charge?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am sorry to say, Sir, it is not in my power to give my hon. Friend the information he desires; but if he will be so good as to repeat his question after Easter, I hope then to give him a satisfactory answer.

MR. H. GARDNER: Do the Government intend to bring in the Bills this Session?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If the hon. Member had listened to my answer, I think he would have gathered from it that such was certainly our intention.

METROPOLITAN POLICE RETURNS.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the accounts showing "the sums received and expended for the purposes of the Metropolitan Police for the year ending 31st March, 1889" will be in the hands of Members of the House before the Vote on the Metropolitan Police is taken.

MR. MATTHEWS: Under the 1st Section of the Act 30 and 31 Vict. ch. 89, the Receiver's accounts have to be presented to Parliament within 30 days after the 31st of March if Parliament be then sitting; and this enactment will be observed.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Will the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury say that the Metropolitan Police Vote will not be taken until these accounts are in the hands of hon. Members?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I shall be exceedingly glad if it can be so arranged.

BURIALS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called to Section 13 of "The Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880;" and whether, under this Clause, it would be perfectly legal to bury an unbaptized person in Westminster Abbey, or indeed any church in which burials may lawfully be held?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Section 13 of the Burial Laws Amendment Act of 1880 was brought under my notice when the former question of the hon. Member appeared on the paper, and I can only repeat the answer I then gave him, that I did not feel myself qualified to give an opinion on the legal points of the case.

MR. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Might I ask the Home Secretary whether it is not a fact that the right of interment in a church does not depend on the ecclesiastical state of the deceased person, and whether Sir Rowland Hill was not buried in a church, though an unbaptized person?

MR. MATTHEWS: I must have notice of that question.

CATTLE DISEASE.

MR. CHARLES DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Vice Chamberlain whether it is the intention of the Lords of the Privy Council to permit the import of live sheep from the Netherlands, and not to require them to be slaughtered at the port of landing, on the ground that the sheep of the Netherlands are now free from foot-and-mouth disease; and whether the Lords of the Privy Council intend no longer to enforce the law concerning the slaughter of infected animals at ports of landing, but to permit the entrance of live sheep from countries free from disease, and absolutely to prohibit those coming from infected countries; and, if so, whether any provision will be made for the hundreds of people who will be thrown out of employment round Deptford Cattle Market?

VISCOUNT LEWISHAM: The Amendment Order of March 1, which does not come into effect until June 1, will admit sheep from the Netherlands without slaughter at the port of landing, and at present the landing of all animals from Germany, including sheep, in this country is prohibited. Under the provisions of the Contagious Diseases of Animals Acts, animals may be landed for slaughter from all countries if not prohibited by Order of Council, and the Privy Council have no power to alter the law in this respect. The Privy Council are bound to exempt from these regulations any country which complies with the conditions laid down by the Act of 1878. At the present time these countries are Scandinavia and Canada, and the Netherlands from the 1st of June next. The Privy Council are not in a position to make any provision for persons who may be affected by any Order passed by them in the exercise of the duties imposed on them by Parliament.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (TONNAGE) BILL.

MR. SEXTON: I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will take the Committee stage of this Bill this evening?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope that it will be in our power to proceed with the Bill to-night. I am not aware that there is any serious objection to it.

MR. SEXTON: There is.

SANITARY LAWS AMENDMENT AND CONSOLIDATION (METROPOLIS) BILL.

*MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras): May I ask the President of the Local Government Board when he will be able to introduce his Bill to amend and consolidate the sanitary laws?

*Mr. RITCHIE: I cannot exactly state the time. It has now almost reached a form in which it can be introduced, and I hope the Bill will not be very long delayed.

NAVY BILL.

Viscount CURZON (Bucks, Wycombe): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can state when the Second Reading of the Navy Bill will be taken, and whether the Bill will be put down as the first Order of the day on which it is to be taken?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I cannot yet say when the Second Reading will be taken, for it is not yet introduced. But on Thursday, or Monday at the latest, I hope I shall be able to name a day for the Second Reading.

THE CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Mr. H. BYRON REED: May I ask when we are likely to reach Class 2 of the Civil Service Estimates?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The Government are anxious to make as much progress as possible, but unfortunately it does not depend on them how rapid that progress is. If my hon. Friend is a diligent attendant in this House, he may be able to form his own estimate of the time the hon. Members think it necessary to take for the discussion of the Estimates and of the time likely to elapse before Class 2 is reached.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE, COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resolved, That this House will this day resolve itself into the Committee of Supply after the Fifth Order of the Day has been disposed of.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

ORDER OF THE DAY.

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NAVAL DEFENCE.

Resolutions reported—

"That it is expedient to authorize (b) the creation of a Naval Defence Account, to which moneys issued for the aforesaid purposes may be carried, and the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, and the temporary borrowing, on the security of the Consolidated Fund, of any sums which may be required to meet excess of expenditure in any financial year."

"That it is expedient to authorize (c) the adoption of provisions to carry the above objects into effect."

Sir W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I do not wish to detain the House for more than a moment; but, Sir, I desire to take this opportunity of asking the Government to give us assurance that the Naval Estimates Committee of last year will be reconstituted in the present year. That Committee sat for only one Session and was not able to complete its labours, reporting on only four votes. The Army Estimates Committee, on the contrary, sat for practically two Sessions and completed its labours.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, Order! I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but he is not in order in raising a discussion on this subject at this stage.

Sir W. PLOWDEN: Am I not in order in asking the Government for an assurance that the Naval Estimates Committee will be reconstituted?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman may put a question.

Sir W. PLOWDEN: Then I ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can give me such an assurance?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have received no notice of this question, though it is of a character which renders due notice most desirable. Speaking offhand, and having in view the large amount of work before the House, I do not think it would be desirable to re-appoint the Naval Estimates Committee in the present Session. A very careful consideration was given to the matter by the Government last Session, and I do not think it would be in the interest of public business to re-appoint the Committee.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that, while the Army Estimates Committee has gone through all the Votes, the Naval Estimates Committee has not dealt with several important Votes.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Again, I say, I think that these questions ought not to be sprung upon the House. While I do not think it desirable to re-appoint the Committee this Session, I by no means wish to exclude a further consideration of the Estimates.

Sir E. REED (Cardiff): I should like to ask what opportunity will be furnished to the House in the course of procedure after the introduction of the Bill, for discussing and taking the sense of the House upon the question of the description of vessels to be built? The French Government is building fast cruisers covered all over with thin armour to keep out the new melenite shells. In the Admiralty scheme some of the 60 cruisers are to be laid down two or three years hence, and not one of them has this kind of protection. The First Lord of the Admiralty must see that an opportunity ought to be provided for discussing and taking the opinion of the House upon such a question.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I think that the question is one which can be discussed either on the Second Reading of, or in Committee on, the Bill. Although the French are building one or two cruisers, there is only one covered with thin armour; and if the hon. Member for Cardiff declares that such is a better mode of protection than that adopted by the Admiralty, I am prepared to combat that view. Undoubtedly opportunity will be afforded for the discussion of the question.

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That the Resolution which was upon the 4th instant reported from the Committee on Naval Defence, and was then agreed to by the House, be now read;

"That it is expedient to authorize (a) the expenditure of a sum not exceeding £21,500,000, for the purpose of building, arming, equipping, and completing for sea vessels for Her Majesty's Navy; of this expenditure a sum not exceeding £10,000,000 to be issued out of the Consolidated Fund in the seven years ending on the 31st day of March 1896; and a sum not exceeding £11,500,000, to be issued out of moneys provided by Parliament for Naval Services during the five financial years ending on the 31st day of March 1894."

Ordered, That a Bill be brought in upon the said Resolution, and upon the Resolutions this day agreed to by the House; and that Mr. Courtney, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord George Hamilton, and Sir Michael Hicks Beach do prepare and bring it in.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 186.]

MOTION.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR SCOTLAND.

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Buteshire) moved for leave to introduce the following Bills:—Bill to amend the laws relating to local government in Scotland; Bill to make supplementary provisions for amending the laws relating to local government in Scotland; Bill to amend the laws relating to the election of Parochial Boards in Scotland; and Bill to amend the procedure in regard to Private Bills relating to Scotland. The right hon. and learned Gentleman said,—The four Bills which stand in my name embody the proposals of Her Majesty's Government regarding local government for Scotland in the wider sense of that term. Before closing, I shall explain to the House what is the relation of the several Bills, and what are the region and scope of each. But my main purpose is to explain the measure of which each is a part, and, accordingly, I shall venture to invite the attention of the House to the whole of the Bills, as forming a scheme for local government in Scotland. The matter in hand is large and detailed, and I shall have, I fear, to make a large claim upon the indulgence and patience of the House, and for that reason, if for no other, I abstain from all but the fewest general observations on the importance of this subject. But I think that the statement of a few principles may better remind the House of the difficulties of the question, and also of the spirit in which the Government undertakes to deal with it. In the first place, I hope that all in the House will agree that a satisfactory measure of local government for Scotland must be distinctively Scottish in its acceptance of characteristic methods of administration, in its development of them, and, if necessary, also in its terminology. Secondly, while the primary object of all such measures is good administration, yet it is right as largely as possible to apply to local government that popular interest in public affairs which is characteristic of the times. Related to that last proposition, I may say that regard, on the other hand, must be had to the serious problems presented by the existing system of rating in Scotch counties, in view of the general principle that the administration and rates should be in the hands of those who provide them. In the next place, the scheme must be one applicable to the whole of Scotland, and it must, therefore, be fitted to stand the strain of the various social and economic conditions to be found in a country which extends from the English border to the farthest Hebrides. Lastly, I think all will agree that, however ambition might prompt in the opposite direction, the scheme, while comprehensive, must be of such reasonable dimensions that it can pass through Parliament. The question is sometimes raised whether in the general view of local government one should begin with the larger or smaller unit or area of administration. I confess, keeping especially in view the proposals with which I am charged, that comes to be much more a question of rhetorical or argumentative arrangement. But my grounds for saying so will better appear when the scheme is further developed. I propose to speak first of the government of counties, and in order to define that word I must deal in the first place with burghs. I speak of burghs rather for the purpose of clearing the ground of a subject with which, fortunately, we do not require to deal. The Royal and Parliamentary burghs in Scotland are very numerous; some are large and some are small. But each one of them is a completely equipped and self-contained municipality. The county authorities do not exercise any jurisdiction within the Royal and Parliamentary burghs, and, on the other hand, those burghs do not contribute to the county rates. Now, I profess to a predilection for the Royal and Parliamentary burghs of Scotland, which I believe is common in that country; and I have a superstitious dread of raising a hand against the organization of those homes and centres of civic life in Scotland. But, viewing the matter in a more utilitarian and rationalistic spirit, I cannot help thinking, in a Bill the object of which is to extend Municipal institutions in Scotland, it would be a singular beginning to pull them down where they already exist; and, accordingly, we propose to leave the Royal and Parliamentary burghs as they stand, subject only to two modifications. At present, the burghs of Scotland are equipped with a separate and independent police force where they have over 5,000 of population; and it has sometimes been a matter of observation that that is rather too small an area to maintain a force, and that the general efficiency would be greater if the forces were attached to larger areas. That is a point to which attention was recently directed. It will be in the recollection of hon. Gentlemen who sat on the Select Committee on the Burghs Police and Health Bill that the conclusion come to was that it would be better to raise the figure from 5,000 to 7,000, and to fix 7,000 as the limit at which the separate burgh police forces should be merged in the county police. We propose to carry out that recommendation. The second instance of deviation from the principle I have stated is in regard to the administration of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act. There, again, every Royal and Parliamentary burgh is a separate Local Authority, and there again we propose that they should be merged in the county when under 7,000. A word now as regards what are called police burghs. They are, again, subject to these two modifications, and subject to the limit of 7,000 population which I have mentioned; otherwise we leave the police burghs just as they are. They will retain their complete independence and autonomy. Accordingly, I part with this branch of the subject by saying that I believe we shall fulfil the loudly-expressed desire of the burghs in Scotland, and I think I may also consult the general convenience if we leave them in the full enjoyment of their pristine independence and autonomy. That leads me to consider the administration to be provided for the counties apart from the towns. I think it is convenient that I should remind the House of what is the existing administration and what are the bodies which at present wield power in the counties. Speaking roughly, we may say that there are four bodies which require to be mentioned—the Commissioners of Supply, the Road Trustees, the Local Authorities under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, and the Justices of the Peace exercising those miscellaneous administrative powers which are vested in them by Statute. I desire to assure the House at the outset that it is only administrative functions we propose to meddle with in the government of the counties. The House knows that for the peace of a county the Sheriff is responsible. With him rests the duty of maintaining order, and in his hands are the use and the disposition of the police force, which is provided and equipped by the county body. Accordingly, it is with a complete reservation of these judicial powers, which would be entirely beyond the province of any such measure, that I proceed to discuss the changes we propose to make. The Commissioners of Supply are a body in which are vested considerable and various powers. They are the most important body in the County, and so far as administration is concerned, the Justices of the Peace do not figure nearly so largely among them as they do in England. The Commissioners of Supply consist of the owners of property only—the owners of land of £100 annual value and the owners of houses of £200 annual value. It is therefore a body consisting entirely of landowners. If it be said that that is an anomaly, it must be borne in mind at the same time that there is a correlative anomaly in the rating, because the whole county rates which are levied by the Commissioners of Supply are levied on owners only. Accordingly, representation and rating have gone together in the most definite and complete way, with this one exception. The Commissioners of Supply levy their rates on all owners of property, even on those under £100 value. That is the only defect or anomaly in the system known as representing the combination of representation and rating. I will mention one or two of the leading duties of the Commissioners of Supply. They are charged with the duty of equipping and maintaining the police force in the county, but it would be an error to say that the Commissioners of Supply have all the functions relating to police which, at first sight, might be implied from that term. They rate for the police; they maintain the police; but, so far as the management of the police, the appointing of the Chief Constable, suggesting an alteration in the numbers of the force and the like, are concerned, the functions rest not with the Commissioners of Supply, but with the Police Committee, consisting of the Lord Lieutenant, the Sheriff, and a certain number of elected Commissioners of Supply from their own body, the numbers being from three to 15. Another important duty of the Commissioners is in regard to valuation, and I hope that my hon. Friends behind me will not object to my saying that I think that the Scottish system of the Valuation Roll is one which has points on which commendation is not thrown away. They have maintained the system of valuation, they have also, through a Statutory Committee, the duty of disposing of appeals against valuations. Besides that, they have duties under the Registration Act and under the Lunacy Acts, and they have a general charge and custody of public buildings in the county. Such, then, is the first and most important existing County Authority in Scotland, the Commissioners of Supply. I now come to the Road Trustees. There is no distinction in Scotland as to main roads; the whole of the roads in the county are vested in the County Road Trustees and are subject to their management. This body consists of the Commissioners of Supply, with certain elected members who are chosen by the ratepayers in every parish, the only persons not voting at those elections naturally being the Commissioners of Supply, who have already a seat on the Board. This body acts through an executive body called the Road Board, and it also divides the county into districts managed by District Road Committees. A half of the Board is composed of Commissioners of Supply and a half of elected members, and, as you have one-half of the rates levied on owners of property and a half on occupiers, the principle of representation with rating is consistently adhered to. But there is one exception to that rule of rating which is of considerable importance and significance. Many of the roads in Scotland are charged with debt; the debt on new works is met by rates, levied solely on the owners. Here, therefore, you have the element of capital expenditure falling upon owners only, and the works being controlled and ordered by those who pay for them. The next of the four bodies I mentioned is the Local Authority under the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act. That, again, is composed of Commissioners of Supply and of representatives of occupiers; and there, again, the rating is half on the occupier and half on the owner, and representation and rating go together. With regard to the fourth body, the Justices of the Peace, I cannot carry the illustration into that region, because they have no authority to levy rates. The general result, therefore, is, as I have said, that in all cases representation and rating at present go together. There is another feature which completely distinguishes the case of Scotland from that of England. None of the county rating falls upon occupiers only. In burghs, on the other hand, the rule is the other way, and there, accordingly, you have the ratepayers' franchise; you have household suffrage, and you again find that the general principle which I have referred to as of parallel importance is systematically adhered to. That is the state of matters with which we have to deal, and the question is, what is best to be done, or, as I should put it, how can we popularize County Government, and at the same time not lose sight of the wholesome principle that those who administer and control, should pay? I do not suppose that it will be possible to frame a scheme with *doctrinaire* preciseness harmonious with these principles. The best you can do is to settle your institution in such a way that there shall be an adequate and effective recognition of the principle. The House will not be surprised to hear that we have begun by setting up a County Council. It is proposed that the Chairman of the new County Council shall bear the time-honoured name of the Convener of the County. As to the constitution of the Council, we do not propose to have a separate representation of owners or a separate representation of occupiers. All will be elected by the same constituency. When I say that I do not refer to the electoral divisions, but to the quality or composition of the constituency. We do not propose that there shall be Aldermen. I base that refusal on patriotic grounds. Aldermen we know not, and I gather that there is a general acquiescence in the negative conclusion. There is an apparent deviation from the principle that the Council shall consist solely of elected members. This is a matter of expediency and convenience. We suggest that the present Convener of the county, the present Chairman of the Road Trustees, and the Local Authority, and the Lord Lieutenant shall sit in the first County Council. I will say at once that this is not suggested as a balance or check upon the power of the Council, but merely because they are the depositaries of an amount of experience in the management of county affairs which seems to make it highly convenient that they should be on the Council at the initiation of the new system. I rather think when hon. Gentlemen consider the various circumstances under which the County Councils are started that they will regard this as a very convenient proceeding. It is only a suggestion for the more efficient starting of the Council, and it is not meant as a check or watch upon the operations of the new Councils. It is proposed that the constituency to elect this Council shall be substantially, though not formally, the same as in the burghs—that is to say, that it will consist of qualified ratepayers, including women, and also Peers who are disqualified from voting for Members of the House of Commons, but who ought to be, by universal consent, qualified for voting at such elections. Another element which requires delicate handling is that of the service franchise voters. The importance of this body is, I believe, greater in Scotland than in England. The question is how to enlist their interest in local public affairs when they are not at present rated. That is a very serious difficulty, and it does not seem justifiable to throw to the winds the principle of representation and ratepaying together, and I should deprecate any attempt at making a bargain with any class by saying, "We give you the franchise, but saddle you with a local burden." It is, therefore, proposed that any qualified service franchise holder may claim to be put on the County Roll on his payment of the county rates. The service franchise holder would merely undertake the very inconsiderable burden represented by his share of the county rates, and that indebtedness will be an evidence of the sincerity of his desire to participate in what is, to a large extent, a matter of rating. The constituency that I have described is a completely popular constituency. It is proposed to transfer to the County Council, generally speaking, the powers exercised by the Commissioners of Supply, the Road Trustees, and the Local Authority, the Contagious Diseases Act, and certain specified statutory powers of Justices of the Peace, not including licensing. I am sure that hon. Gentlemen who know Scotland will join with me in saying that the Commissioners of Supply are a body whose conduct has been business-like and economical, while they have not been obtrusive or garrulous. I cannot help thinking that the House, if it has followed my exposition of the existing state of representation and of rating, will be startled by the anomaly it displays. What, then, should be done in order to meet the anomaly? It is impossible to meet it symmetrically or with mathematical precision, but at the same time we have provided a system which I am sure is liberal, and which I hope will be recognized as satisfactory. It might have been possible to rectify the anomaly to which I have referred by changing the incidence of county rating; but we have adopted another, and, I think, hon. Member will agree, a preferable method of attaining our object. In the first place we propose that there should be a judicial ascertainment of the amount of rates payable by owners only, and that this amount shall be sterotyped, as the amount beyond which burdens shall not be laid upon owners solely. The provision is that after the passing of the Act, the Sheriff of the County shall ascertain and determine what has been, during the previous five years, the average amount in the pound of each rate which is payable by owners only; that when that rate has been ascertained that rate shall as heretofore be payable in following years by owners only, and shall be included in the owners' consolidated rate; but where the rate to be fixed in future years exceeds in amount such average rate, the portion of the rate exceeding the average shall fall into the general public, and shall be paid by owners and occupiers equally. Accordingly, the House will perceive that it is proposed to stereotype the existing burden upon owners only. But if the future administration of the new body should necessitate an increase of the rates, then the increment shall fall upon owners and occupiers equally. That proposal has been well considered, and I think that it will be found to furnish, at all events, a mitigation of the anomaly which I have stated, and to present a fair guarantee for the recognition of the equitable doctrine which is indispensable for carrying through the consideration of such questions. I said that was the first of the provisions which regulate the imposition of the rates. But there is another. The House may, perhaps, recollect that I pointed out incidentally that in the existing law of rating there is a recognized distinction between capital expenditure, and that capital has been treated as a burden falling upon owners; and, accordingly, in that matter the voice of the owner alone is heard. That is in the case of new roads, and in the case of the rating required for debts. Well, Sir, that is an example of the necessary conditions of expenditure which ought not to be lost sight of, and what we propose to do as regards capital expenditure is this. We propose that works involving capital expenditure, and also the borrowing of money, which, of course, is an obligation of the nature of capital—that these shall require the consent of a Standing Joint Committee, which shall be composed of seven County Councillors and seven Commissioners of Supply, the Sheriff of the County presiding as Chairman of that composite Committee. I have already indicated that there are precedents for large and important interests in the Counties of Scotland being regulated by a composite Committee, and that, even in the days of the undisputed authority of the Commissioners of Supply, we have had something of the nature of a composite Committee. Here, again, we purpose that this same Joint Standing Committee, whose consent is necessary to expenditure on capital works, or for borrowing money—that that Committee should be the Police Committee under the new administration. I pause here to remind the House of what must not be lost sight of in our consideration of these proposals, and that is the great importance of the steady and continuous administration of matters relating to the police which the Legislature has hitherto shown—I do not say out of distrust of the Commissioners of Supply any more than we are now showing distrust of County Councillors; but they have shown that it is necessary to concentrate the administration and management of this delicate matter in a body that is representative of more interests than one. And accordingly, I trust that the House will approve of this solution of one of the problems of peculiar delicacy, at the same time that we find means of enabling and justifying the constitution of a popular County Council, without derogating from any interests which are subjected to it. I pass now from the transfer from the Commissioners of Supply to the County Council, and I turn now to the Road Trustees. The House is probably aware—at all events hon. Gentlemen representing Scottish constituencies are familiar with the fact —that there is a General Road Act for Scotland passed in 1878. There are, however, eleven counties which have not yet been brought under that general Statute. It was not contemplated when that general Statute was passed that those counties should remain outside the general system for more than a period of probation; and they had powers of electing to come in under the general Road Act if they pleased. Some of them, however, have stood out for this considerable time, and we think—now especially, when county administration is being reorganized—that they should be gently constrained to come into the existing system. We shall then have the full complement of functions and duties for the County Councils in all the Scottish counties, and the administration of the roads is one of the most important. Now, Sir, I have already mentioned that, while the roads in a county and the power of rating in a county are vested in the general body of county Road Trustees, the management is to a large extent vested in the hands of subordinate bodies. District Committees are constituted in each of the counties of Scotland to supervize and administer the roads in their district. I think my hon. Friends representing Scottish counties will agree that that system has worked extremely well —that the county is too large, and certainly the parish too small, to enable satisfactory management, unless you adopt an intermediate area; and, accordingly, we propose not merely that that method—as well as, I may say in passing, the whole scheme of the Road Act—shall not merely pass into the hands of the new body, but shall continue practically as before. But we do more. We have in the District Road Committee a very important example and lesson, and we think that this is an occasion on which it may be well to reconstitute the district committee and to add to its duties. It has sometimes been proposed that in our Scottish system we should have district councils, and no doubt there is much to be said for that. But one of the cross currents of public opinion in Scotland about local administration in Scotland, which has set in very strongly, is a great aversion to multiplied elections. And, accordingly, I think that the Scottish people generally will welcome a plan which enables matters which are better administered by districts than either by counties on the one hand, or parishes on the other, to be put into the charge of a body which you have got ready to hand. Well, Sir, we constitute it in this way. It will be the duty of the County Council to divide its county into districts, and I should think probably it will not find much difficulty in determining districts, because they, again, are already at hand in the road districts. But it is in their power, and they must consider the general convenience of administration, to divide the county into districts, and in the matters relegated to district management the district committee will be constituted thus. It will contain all the members of the County Council who sit for the electoral divisions comprised within the district; and, in the second place, of two members to be elected by each Parochial Board within the district. The reason why we propose this change will, I think, prove satisfactory to the House. I have hitherto spoken of transfers of powers from existing county bodies to the County Council and its committees. But I will now mention to the House a transfer we make from another quarter. At present the law relating to public health is administered by the Parochial Board in the county as the local authority, and judging from the opinions of those concerned in the administration in all its regions, I gather that that administration has not been completely successful. I believe that in many parts of Scotland the Public Health Act is little better than a dead letter, and it is most desirable that something should be done to add strength and vigour to the administration of it. Accordingly, we propose to divest the Parochial Board of its powers as local authority under the Public Health Act, and to transfer those powers to the County Council, to be exercised through the District Committees. We fix and settle the functions of the District Committees in this way, that we make them the Statutory Local Authority for their districts; and, accordingly, while the transfer under the Public Health Act is from the Parochial Board to the County Council, it goes direct, and is handed down for administration to the District Committees. That, I think, is not an unimportant feature in this scheme. And we take advantage of that change in the authority of dealing with Public Health to give additional powers. We propose, as my right hon. Friend did in the English Bill, that a medical officer of health shall be appointed by the County Council. Each District Committee will necessarily, in its administration of the existing Public Health Act, have the right to appoint its Sanitary Inspectors; and we are making provisions of a flexible kind, so that County Councils and District Committees may combine and make arrangements so as to utilize and economize the strength of the sanitary staff at the joint disposal of both. In the same relation, I may point out that we have given power to the County Councils to combine by joint committees where there are matters of common concern. Therefore, it will be observed that we piece together and link together the working of the various authorities I have mentioned, so that there will be an economy of strength and that common objects may be attained without each going about it separately. Now, I will mention, in a word, certain other powers which are conferred upon the County Councils. They will have power to resolve to oppose Private Bills, and they will have power to make certain byelaws for the police regulation of the county. I do not dwell upon these, because I am sorry to say I have other matters in hand which, perhaps, require more serious attention. I shall briefly state some of the machinery by which this administration is to be set agoing. And, first of all, with regard to registration. From the additions to the constituency which I have mentioned, it will be obvious to hon. Gentlemen that we cannot act simply on the Parliamentary register—that there must be a new register for those persons who are brought in, and are not now on the register. Of course, that involves the preparation of another register, but I think when the details are examined it will be found that that is not a formidable matter, and we are endeavouring to make provisions which will render the additional cost very small. I have mentioned the ways by which persons whom we are going to entitle to vote for County Councillors, and who are unable to vote for Members of Parliament, are to be brought on to the register, and I therefore need not dwell on the machinery for effecting the rights we propose to confer. Then as regards the elections, we propose that the County Council shall be elected triennially, and that all shall go out together. We propose that the Council shall be divided into electoral divisions, and that one Councillor shall sit for each division—single-member divisions. One question arises as to how the electoral divisions shall be determined. It is, of course, a matter involving a great deal of examination of the district and the community in all its various bearings, and I think the more satisfactory way for the ultimate division is by a Boundary Commission. A Boundary Commission will command the absolute confidence of all concerned; and moreover, there is work for such a Commission in certain other matters, such as what in Scotland is called redding the boundaries for various jurisdictions. But then, if this Bill passes into law, there must be temporary provision for the division of the counties, and it is proposed that the Secretary for Scotland shall determine the number of members for each County Council, and then the electoral division will be drawn by the Sheriffs. I think that probably is the method which will commend itself best to the judgment of those who are acquainted with, I do not say the difficulties, but more or less the local particulars. Then, as to the qualification of Councillors. We propose that the only qualification shall be that the Councillor elected for a division shall be on the register of the county. I think the House generally will approve of that measure of limitation on the choice of the constituencies. Then, as regards the time of elections. We propose the election of Councils should be on the first Tuesday of December; that it shall be generally in the same manner as the election in burghs divided into wards, and that where there are burghs forming part of a county (which is the case of the smaller burghs), in those cases the election shall take place as part of the municipal election, and at the same time as the municipal election. This will save the worry of a separate election, and will also save a certain amount of expense. Then I have here to make a disclaimer, and I probably shall have to make one or two more. We do not propose to deal with the corrupt practices at such elections, and for this reason, that the whole subject of corrupt practices at elections other than Parliamentary elections is a large one of itself, and I think it would be inopportune and inconvenient if, in dealing with each elective body, we were to treat separately the question of corrupt practices, which should form a chapter in legislation of itself. I need hardly say that I very much sympathize with the anxiety which some of the constituents of the hon. Member for Dundee feel that this subject should as soon as possible be developed into a satisfactory conclusion, but I may say that this is only an instance of the very numerous suggestions which have been made, involving our taking up incidentally large subjects of legislation. We have had other plausible and excellent practical suggestions made about the simplification of the collection of rates. We have also had other suggestions of a very much larger character, but I am sure practical men must recognize that it is absolutely hopeless merely because some branch of an administration comes into contact with the County Councils that, therefore, we are to follow up the clue and redress the whole law relating to that subject. It is for practical reasons quite impossible. Accordingly, I express the hope that in the discussions on the Bill there will be some recollection of the practical limits within which the Bill must be confined if it is to attain the chief end of a Bill, that is, passing into an Act of Parliament. Now, I come to the finance of the County Councils, and I may say generally that we transfer all properties and liabilities of the existing Administering bodies. Therefore, with the modification which I have already stated as to rates, there is a wholesale transfer just as it is, of the system of rating, and also of the whole property of the bodies which are divested. I need not repeat what I have already stated as to the incidence of rating. It remains as before. But we think we can do something in the way of improving the method of laying on and collecting the rates, and without dwelling on the subject in detail, I may say that we consolidate the rates, but the demand note will set forth the various particulars which make up the total. But it will be a consolidated rate which is levied on owners and a consolidated rate which is levied on occupiers. In the region of finance, but merely as a matter of machinery, I may say that it is proposed that there shall be an annual budget setting out the financial condition of the county, and that the budget shall have its due measure of publication and discussion. And then I come to another matter which is of somewhat general importance. There is at present no effective audit of accounts in any local body in Scotland, and I believe there is a general feeling that this state of matters ought not to continue. One of the questions is how to provide an audit which shall meet the susceptibilities of persons concerned and at the same time be effective. I think there will be no objection to county auditors being appointed by the Secretary for Scotland, and their duties will run on from their appointment in such a way that there shall be a publication and a regular audit of accounts and a power of surcharge. It will be the duty of the auditor to state any case of surcharge and there are provisions made for putting the responsibility on the proper shoulders. I need not deprecate the idea that that is an invidious provision. It is a provision which ought to belong to every business establishment, and I hope an opportunity may be found for extending some such system to other bodies in Scotland. As to the officers of the County Council I do not think much difficulty will be found. There is at present existing in each Scottish county a Clerk of Supply, and it is only fair to the gentlemen who fill that office to say that they are admirable public servants—in all cases, I believe, men of high standing and character, versed in public affairs, and very well qualified to help in their administration. We propose that the Clerk of Supply shall become the County Clerk, but he necessarily will hold office at the pleasure of the County Council. It will be an immense advantage to the County

Council to have these able and trustworthy officers at the initiation of the administration. All existing officers will be transferred to the County Council. There will be provision for compensation in the event of abolition of office or loss of emoluments, and the County Council will be masters of all appointments which may subsequently be made. I have said it will be necessary to appoint a Boundary Commission. Their duties will be the permanent settlement of electoral divisions, but I dare say hon. Members are aware that in many cases the existing boundaries between county and burgh are very irregular, and these irregularities lead to considerable inconvenience. We propose that there shall be a rectification where that is convenient, and accordingly there will arise, as a necessary consequence, such a rectification of groups of questions probably admitting of an amicable solution, but which, if allowed to drag out, may end in litigation. We propose that the Boundary Commission should have the duty of adjusting questions arising in this way. I thought on the first view of it that this would not be so complicated a matter as it subsequently appears to be; but I am satisfied that the most expedient way of rectifying and expressing these matters is by this machinery. We have provisions in this Bill for certain counties which stand in special circumstances, and the county which my hon. Friend (Mr. Hozier) represents is one of them. I do not think that I should go into these matters which are, after all, more or less of local interest. As regards Lanarkshire, and also as regards other counties, the proposals of the Government are put in the Bill as representing what they understood to be the general convenience of those concerned; but on that my hon. Friend will believe me we are most willing to hear all that may be said by way of modification, and to accept any suggestions which may be made. Now, I pass to a question of more general importance—the financial relations of the County Councils to the Exchequer. It has been determined that certain grants in aid of local burdens shall ultimately cease, and these are the grants relating to roads, police, medical relief, and pauper lunatics. Taking their amount, as I suppose it is fair to do, for the year 1886-7, which was the year when the question was opened for England and Scotland, the figures are these:—Roads, £35,000; police, £147,000; medical relief, £20,000; pauper lunatics, £87,000—total £289,000. The Exchequer surrenders local taxes and licences, £323,000, which if they stood alone, would represent a gain of £34,000. Hon. Gentlemen will observe that this bears a fair relation to the gain which ensued in England when the like transfer took place. Further relief is obtained from the probate duty, eleven-tenths of half of the probate duty giving £234,000. I have said my figures were given as regards 1886-7. But since then, as the House knows, certain additional grants have been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the old grants have in the interval of time grown. Therefore, in the current year the grants distributed are:—Roads, £70,000; police £156,000; medical relief, £20,000; pauper lunatics, £90,000, giving a total of £335,000. Besides that, there is an additional grant for pauper lunatics of £15,000; boarding-out children and deaf mutes, £6,000, which gives an aggregate of £356,000. The Probate grant is £234,000 and licences £323,000 giving a total of £557,000. We propose that in the first place the grants distributed this year—and this is the permanent arrangement—shall be continued through the County Councils and Town Councils. That amounts to £356,000, leaving over £201,000. But there comes in £30,000 which, I think there is general agreement should go to the Highlands. Taking this from the £201,000 you leave a sum for our disposal after the Probate duty has been met, of £171,000. Now, the question is, what shall be done with that? I think I shall state a proposition, which hardly admits of cavil, if I said it ought to go to burdens falling on the inhabitants of the several districts to be benefited. If the principle is sound, several methods may be conceived for carrying it out. The simplest of all is to apply it to the rates, but that cannot be regarded as the only method of effecting the object. It is merely, perhaps, the most obvious, and it was the one which was adopted in England. But when one examines a little more closely into the history of the application, in England, I think this is clear, that it was done, not because that is the only or necessary mode, but because in England popular feeling pointed out the rates as the part of the burden of the inhabitants of districts which pressed most heavily upon them. Unquestionably in England feeling was strongly decided that when the first opportunity came of applying such grants as these for the benefit of localities, the first claim should be relief of rates. Now, when I turn to Scotland, I find it impossible to say that the same strong feeling exists there about rates. In the discussion about Local Government, the lamentations about the amount and grievance of rates have not been so acute in Scotland as in England. Another subject has been advanced as one upon which Scottish interest and Scottish sympathy is much more largely concentrated, and that is the payment of school fees. I have said that in England the burden which was regarded as entitled to priority of preference when relief was to be obtained was the rates, and by parity of reasoning, the burden that ought to be relieved in Scotland is the burden imposed by school fees. I do not suggest that the proposal so to deal with this matter is to be regarded as acquitting or wiping out any claim for relief for local taxation. What we have to deal with is a desire in Scotland that another burden than the rates should be first dealt with. When one turns from the state of feeling to the popular demand and the reason of the thing, it is impossible to dispute the legitimacy of such a proposal. The local obligation of the ratepayer to pay rates results from the imposition upon him of a specific statuory duty. Another Act of Parliament compels him to send his child to school, and, unless he is to go upon the rates himself, that virtually imposes the relative duty of paying school fees. Therefore, even if we are in search of a burden, brought about by the Legislature, I cannot, in reason, deny that school fees are a burden upon those who are compelled to send their children to school. If that view were carried out, the application of the money would be to those whose children are at school by virtue of compulsion, and who have also to pay fees. But it is impossible to employ any test by which you can apply the benefit to the compulsory element. We must take some other methods. Before passing to the mode which seems to be the fairest and most adequate, I should like to point out two additional considerations which sustain the legitimacy of this mode of applying this money. The payment of fees confers not merely upon the parents, but on the inhabitants of a locality pecuniary benefits. It goes directly in relief of a portion of the rates in this way—I will not say a large, but a considerable extent, and in this way. To a proportion of the children who pay fees, the Parochial Boards, so far as the burden is concerned, stand in *loco parentis*, and, accordingly, for the fees of this large class the relief will come to the people who are ratepayers. Another case where the same direct benefit is conferred upon the ratepayers, I do not represent as amounting to a large item, but as a very striking illustration. It is known that in some parts of Scotland school fees have fallen into abeyance. In the Western Highlands, there is a mere bagatelle of school fees paid in some parishes; in others absolutely none at all. That is done, to a large extent, to the poverty of the district. I do not laud or commend the conduct of the School Boards in suffering that state of things to exist under the existing law; but there your grant will go directly to the Parochial Board, in order to meet the school fees which are at present not exacted. Accordingly, the Government cannot refuse assent to the proposal, which is not contrary to principle, which is sustained by the popular voice of that part of the country to be benefited, and which will, undoubtedly, confer very considerable practical advantages. Then, as to how this is best to be effected. I hope there will be universal agreement that no proposal to relieve parents only who send their children to Board Schools is admissible. You must relieve all whose children are sent to school, whether voluntary schools or School Board schools. Therefore, I think we are absolutely precluded from entertaining the idea of handing over this money for administration by School Boards. In the first place, it is not right that the parents of children attending the Board schools alone should receive benefit. In the second place, it would be a most inappropriate and most invidious hand by which to pass along the benefit to the other schools. It must go through the Education Department. I think the House will find that that is the only way, the only channel, by which this benefit can be equitably and conveniently conveyed to its recipients. There is another restriction upon the operation. We have only about £170,000, and I think hon. Gentlemen will agree that that would be taken only adequate to meet a certain amount of school fees. At the same time, it will meet a large amount. I abstain from going into details, because I have other topics to dwell upon, and this necessarily is a matter which requires close scrutiny and examination. That money, administered through the Education Department, will make a very appreciable relief in the matter of those school fees which belong to the class of elementary, and that is where the compulsory clause is in harsh operation. Accordingly, I have stated the conclusion which has been come to by the Government, and which I believe will give satisfaction to Scotland and to the House. I am happy to relieve the House from the consideration of the subject covered by the first two Bills as to the division of the matter. The main provisions are in the first Bill, and the second Bill contains what is necessarily a large amount of supplementary provision or machinery. If anyone tries his hand at the preparation of a Bill of this kind, and gives it four legs to stand upon, you require a large number of auxiliary clauses, and it is thought convenient to separate the portions of the Bill which belong to the first from the parts which belong to the second class. Now, I turn from the county to the parish. We propose to reform the Parochial Boards. I hope that hon. Gentlemen will not be disappointed when I say that we cannot undertake to deal in this Bill with the School Boards. There you have a strong instance of what I already referred to. If you enter upon that, you open a fresh chapter of legislation upon a vast and far reaching subject. You have the subject also complicated by the existing machinery and the cumulative vote; and altogether that opens up a chapter of controversy and rearrangement which would form a very serious practical impediment to legislation on the other and more urgent matter. If the Parochial Boards of Scotland be scrutinized from a *doctrinaire* point of view—or the point of view of theory—I am afraid that they are not very defensible. There are burghal and non-burghal parishes. In burghal parishes there are seated at the Board four representatives of the Kirk Session, four representatives of the Magistrates, and certain number of elected Members—by Statute an undeterminate number, but determined by the Board of Supervision. In non-burghal parishes, which are the vast majority, the position is this: The Kirk Session is represented by a number somewhere about three, and the Royal burgh within the parishes is entitled to be represented; and then you have all the owners of land if over £20 a year value; and, besides, you have Members elected by the ratepayers other than the owners. That, however, does not complete the complexity of the machinery because in the election of the elected Members the ratepayers have a plural vote. That is determined by the annual value of the property upon which the ratepayer is qualified to vote as occupier. A man may be so fortunate as to have six votes, while others have but one. One startling result of this system occurs in the parish of Old Machar, in the immediate neighbourhood of Aberdeen. The number of owners of £20 value who sit on that Parochial Board is 2,164. Now, seeing that the business in hand is the administration of parochial relief, I think it will be agreed that to invoke and imply 2,164 Aberdonians is a great throwing away of intellectual power. It is easy to comment on the anomalies of that system, but, at the same time, I think that any one who considers the invidious, delicate, and most important duties of the Parochial Board, will not set lightly to work in the construction of a Parochial Board. It is all-important that the administration of parochial relief should, in the interests of the people, be in firm and steady hands; and one of the considerations which must be looked to in all proposals for electing Parochial Boards is the necessity of saving the people and saving the Parochial Boards from their being, in the discharge of those invidious and delicate duties, under pressure of most creditable sentiment. That, I think, the House generally will agree is an object which must be held steadily in view. At the same time, there does not appear to be reason for undue caution in the construction of a Board of this kind; and what we propose is this, that the number of the Parochial Board in each case shall be determined (as it must be determined when hon. Gentlemen think of it) with regard to the peculiar population and circumstances of each parish, by the Board of Supervision. I think the House will agree that you cannot lay down in a Statute the appropriate number for all the multitudinous parishes in Scotland, some 800 in number. It must be left to some central Board and the Board of Supervision, from its being in touch with all the Parochial Boards in Scotland, is the body upon which naturally that duty will fall. Then, how are the members to be elected? Without any straining after ingenuity, one tolerably obvious course arises in this situation. We propose that half of the Parochial Board shall be elected by owners, and the other half by occupiers. This is a case where you have a rate which is levied half on the owner and half on the occupier; and, accordingly, it does not require very great ingenuity to arrive at the conclusion that that is a tolerably fair course to adopt. I think it will also be found that that will bring together various elements in the parish which are interested in the subject. There is one practical difficulty in the way of working out that system which occurs when you consider the number of owners in some of the parishes. In some the number is very small. Some parishes are owned by one proprietor, and in some others there are the most exiguous numbers. That, however, does not occur in so many that it need present any fatal obstacle in the way of carrying out the proposal, and we leave it to the Board of Supervision to determine where the number is insufficient to procure an effective election, and in that case the Board of Supervision are to make up the owners' half of the Board. They are to do so by choosing owners or occupiers of over £50 in value, or other fit persons. The House will perceive that here is a body in which you have no political objects to serve, in which adminstration of the direst kind—and of a kind which requires firm and decided action—is all that has to be considered. We think it for the Board of Supervision to equip the Parochial Board in those comparatively few instances where the owning constituency is not large enough to equip it themselves. Then, I should add that we propose that these elections should take place at the same time as the elections for the County Councils, and that for the obvious reason of saving multiplicity of elections, and also expense. Then, I would remind the House that this subject is one which is closely linked to our scheme for the counties, because these Parochial Boards, constituted and elected in the way I have described, are the Boards which have to contribute each two Members to the District Committees, which form the intermediate organ between the parish and the county. I have now completed what I have got to say in regard to the Parochial Boards Bill, and I think I have sufficiently explained its objects. Now I pass to another subject of very high importance. I have spoken hitherto of affairs appertaining to counties, to burghs, and to parishes. I now pass to a wider region, because here we enter the province of Parliament. But it is to be observed that the matters dealt with here, as in the other branches of this subject, are distinctly local; for every Private Bill, such as we are concerned with here, affects, directly and primarily, some Scottish locality—it may be a county, it may be a burgh, it may even be a parish. And accordingly I am not trespassing out of the region we assign to ourselves by dealing with this particular subject. Nobody disputes—certainly I am not here to suggest a doubt of the soundness of the Constitution Rule which places such Private Bills within the province and arbitrament of Parliament. The question is merely as to the mode of conducting—the method by which Parliament shall best ascertain the facts which will enable it to dispose of them. And, accordingly, in our proposals the power of Parliament remains intact. Private Bills for Scotland will come into Parliament; will be read a second time, if Parliament so judge, in the Houses of Parliament as before; but when the Second Reading stage is passed then, *ipso facto*, by force of our Act, these Bills will stand transferred for ascertainment to a Scottish Commission. They will be reported upon by the Commission to the House from which the reference comes, and with their Report the function of the Commission in the matter terminates. The matter then falls back into the hands of Parliament. I feel that, in speaking upon this subject, I am trenching on a province to which one hon. Member has established a peculiar claim. The subject of Private Bill legislation has largely advanced in recent years, and it has reached, owing to the Report of the Joint Committee of the two Houses last Session, a stage in the history of public questions which gives it a commanding interest. I am bound to say that that result was largely due to the intelligent and persistent advocacy of my hon. Friend the Member for the Partick Division of Lanark (Mr. Craig Sellar). I am sure, when he hears the proposals which I am now going to make, his generosity and public spirit will make him rejoice at the further step which his favourite subject has taken; but I desire to the full to acknowledge how largely the position is due to himself. The Joint Committee reported upon the question of Private Bill legislation as a general question affecting the Three Kingdoms. The Bill which I propose relates to Scotland only; and there is a certain appropriateness in Scotland coming first, because while on the reason of the thing the Joint Committee were satisfied of the expediency of referring such Bills to a Commission, yet if you turn to national sentiment and national opinion, it must be allowed that the case of Scotland is much stronger than that of the other parts of the country. In Scotland there has come to be of recent years a general concurrence of opinion upon this subject among those who are directly affected by it. Our municipalities, our public bodies, our commercial bodies, our business men, are all most strongly in favour of this change. It has also taken hold—I will not say the imagination, but the reason, of the people in the several districts in Scotland in a way which entitles it to our fullest consideration; and the mode in which we propose to deal with it, I think, will show that hazard is run by no interest involved, and that great good may be done in the way of simplicity and economy. We propose that a Commission shall be appointed to deal with such Bills. It will be so constituted that each inquiry will be conducted by one Scottish Judge and two appointed Commissioners. We desire to say that the view of the Government is that it is specially necessary that there should be a blending of lay and public views on these questions upon the Commission. It is not a proposal to make it a legal question. It is rather a proposal to strengthen the body which investigates the fact, by placing at its head a man trained in the ascertainment of facts, and one who is likely to concentrate the attention of the Commission upon what is really relevant matter. The two appointed Commissioners will be selected in such a way as to bring the views of public men, men of affairs, men of business, into contact with the views of the Judge. Then as regards the proceedings of the Commission, we propose that they shall hold their sittings for each investigation in such one of the several principal towns in Scotland as is most convenient for the locality involved. It is not, therefore, to sit solely in Edinburgh or Glasgow, but is to go to whatever centre of the country—using the word centre in a very wide sense—as is most accessible for those who are concerned. There is another provision which we think will be useful in introducing a formulated statement of local option to the notice of the tribunal which is investigating the facts. We propose that the County Council, or Town Council, within whose jurisdiction are the matters involved in a Private Bill, shall have the right, or the duty, to report upon the measure, and, accordingly, the Commission will be furnished with the matured views of the local representatives of the district of the county. Here, again, I think there is an opportunity for linking the various parts of the scheme which have been submitted to the House, so as to show that it is practicable and expedient to bring together the various subjects which pass under the phrase Local Government, and at once and in one view to pass practical legislation upon it. And now I have to thank hon. Gentlemen opposite, as well as my hon. Friends, for the extreme patience with which they have listened to what I am afraid has been a somewhat dry and detailed statement. I hope I have presented the Bills to the House so that they are understood. I invite hon. Gentlemen to await the presentation of the Bills in type before coming to any definite conclusion upon their merits. I claim for these Bills this: I think they are coherent and logical. I have already said that I deprecate the treatment of this subject piecemeal. I think it is necessary, in order to a right treatment of it, that it should be thought out from beginning to end. You may have plausible suggestions, and liberal suggestions, and popular suggestions; but if you adopt them in one part without thinking of the others, they will land you in irremediable confusion. It is in that spirit, and encouraged by the kindness of the House, that I venture to make a further appeal to patient consideration of the Bills I have presented. I think they will be found to be coherent. I go further. I think they will be found to be such a solution of those questions as would be arrived at by men divested of Party spirit, and, looking at this subject from the point of view of social welfare, I think it will be found when those subjects are probed that there is no part of them should pass into the region of Party politics. On the contrary, there are vast interest to be advanced and conserved in which we have all a common interest. I am afraid that much that I have had to treat of is prosaic and detailed, and although they cannot be said to be trivial matters, some of them are small. Yet, at the same time, the aggregate of these matters bulks largely in the civic life of a country. I believe if measures of this sort are passed, there will be a quickened interest in public affairs in the various localities in Scotland, and I believe also that they will further induce Scotsmen to pride themselves upon what is the highest franchise they possess, that they are the masters, along with Englishmen and Irishmen of the British Empire, and derive from the British Parliament their laws.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): Sir, I imagine that it will not be the desire of hon. Members, and indeed it would not be possible even if they did desire it, to enter upon any detailed discussion to-night of the measures which the learned Lord has brought before them. But I am sure that I am expressing the general sentiment of the House, and in particular the opinion of my hon. Friends and right hon. Friends near me, and of those sitting on this side of the House who do not usually associate themselves with the Government and the Party opposite, when I congratulate the learned Lord upon two distinct grounds—in the first place, upon the exceedingly clear, lucid, and effective statement which he has made on a most complicated and involved subject; and, in the second place, upon his having been the spokesman of the Government in introducing the measures which he now brings forward—measures so comprehensive in their nature. There was, I think, some danger of what is commonly called a Local Government Bill for Scotland being framed, which would not be so comprehensive as we now find it is. We all know that last year the Local Government Bill for England dealt only with the superior government of counties, and that the arrangement and the machinery of the subordinate areas was left over to a more convenient season. It would have been a great mistake had this example been followed in Scotland, because County Government in Scotland—although I am far from underrating the importance of the reforms which may be introduced—is not of such immense importance as to excite the great interest it did in the case of England. But the Government have very wisely, as I think, determined to include the reform and re-arrangement of the subordinate bodies as well. Now, as I have said, this is not the occasion to enter upon any criticisms of the proposals now submitted to us on the part of the Government. There are, no doubt, many parts of the scheme, as unfolded to us by the learned Lord, which will excite considerable criticism—indeed, some opposition. I am afraid that, although he has gone a great length in liberalizing the whole system of Local Government in Scotland, there are many things omitted which we should have liked to have seen dealt with, and they will be matter for discussion afterwards. I would mention at once the fact that the new County Council is not to have the control of the police, and that the whole question of licensing is to be removed from their hands. The learned Lord has at all events dealt, with great ingenuity, with the thorny question which arises on any proposal of this sort—namely, how far you can reconcile in a country like Scotland the maxim of taxation and representation going together? We have always been accustomed to adhere to the maxim that taxation and representation should go together; but it is rather difficult when you come to invert the maxim, and say that taxation shall follow representation. In Scotland that is the difficulty experienced by anyone who seeks to interfere with the present arrangements of County Government. The learned Lord has dealt with that part of the subject, as I say, in a very ingenious manner, and I do not know that there is not much to be said for his proposal; but if I might borrow a phrase of his own, which struck me as an admirable phrase, as a means of conveying a certain modified opinion—I should say "it has points upon which commendation is not thrown away." I think, if I go so far as that, I am not committing myself to an entire approval of the learned Lord's proposal in that respect. A great number of the Members of this House will have heard with delight what the learned Lord said on the subject of the relief of School fees. It must be something in the nature of a triumph to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hunter) to find, although, perhaps, not according to the particular method which he advocated, that the principle which he has been urging so strongly has been adopted by the Government. I am afraid, however, there will be considerable resistance to the proposal to extend further the assistance given to denominational schools. But that is a matter which I leave for the present. Then I come to another criticism, which I think the learned Lord must have expected. When he has made so good and so homogeneous a constituency for all other local bodies, why does he fall back in the case of the Parochial Boards upon the division between owners and occupiers? It is, even in itself, inconvenient, because he has told us that he must devise a mode of introducing the Board of Supervision, in order to fill up the voids which would have been created in Parochial Boards by the system of election which he proposes. The fact that the Parochial Boards are to contribute each of them two Members to the District Council, which is to be the chief authority in other matters, besides the question of Poor Law, makes this question of really great importance. I say nothing of the proposals of the Government with reference to Private Bill legislation. I do not see why it was introduced into the general scheme, but when it comes fully before us, we will give it all the consideration which the subject so fully deserves. I do not wish to enter into any argument upon any of these Bills, and I would only say to the learned Lord Advocate that he and his colleagues may depend upon receiving from this side of the House the utmost co-operation and the manifestation of every desire to facilitate the great task which the Government have undertaken. We fully recognize, although it is necessary for us to point out some of the details upon which we differ, the bold and comprehensive spirit in which these measures have been framed; and I can assure the Government, as far as I am concerned, and I am sure I speak for my hon. Friends behind me, that they shall have our best assistance in carrying these proposals into effect in an amended form.

*Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Renfrewshire): I must congratulate my Friends and the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate on the way in which he has introduced these Bills to the House, which, I think, must also agree with me in congratulating him on the success he has achieved, not only because of the manner in which he has introduced the Bills, but also because of the matter of the Bills themselves, which, I think, will meet the desire of those who wish to see Local Government carried on on a broad, firm, and consistent basis in the country of Scotland. As convener of my country, I must say that we feel the kind words the right hon. Gentleman made use of when he spoke of the Commissioners of Supply, who have ere now done great and good service in that position, and I trust that those to whom we shall hand over the authority vested in us, will carry out the traditions of economy which we have followed, and do their best, as we have done in the past, to discharge their duty towards our country and our counties. Then, Sir, I must congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the manner in which he has proposed to use the surplus funds that have come to hand. I think that when that is flashed by telegraph to

Scotland, it will carry to many homes in the North of Scotland great satisfaction, inasmuch, as the relief of a large number of ratepayers, to whom relief will be given by the use of the surplus funds and probate duty will be very great indeed. There are large numbers of those ratepayers who are struggling on the very verge of difficulty, and to them it will be a very great boon indeed. I am sure that that part of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman will be received with great pleasure and much satisfaction. With regard to other parts of the Bill, it is very difficult for us at present to enter into their discussion, and I will not attempt to do so at the present moment. I can only hope that they will be met in the same spirit that has been evidenced by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell Bannerman) and that ere long we shall be able to pass into law a Bill that will be a credit to the Government and do good to the country.

*MR. HALDANE (Haddington): We must all, I think, agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs in the opinion that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate was clear and distinct in every detail, so clear that it seems to me to carry with it a certain disadvantage to himself —the disadvantage that it exposes him to comments and speeches from hon. Members who have listened to it on this side of the House, and who feel that they are almost in as good a position to meet what he has put before them as if they had the Bill before them. There were, however, two or three points in the Statement which, it seems to me, are open to a certain amount of criticism. There was a phrase which the Lord Advocate repeated more than once, namely—that taxation and representation should go together. That is an excellent maxim in so far as it means that your representation is to go at least as far as your taxation. In the first place, a Bill of this kind is looked on with great anxiety in a country like Scotland because of the enormous power which its provisions may exercise. It is to be of advantage not only to the people directly affected, but it is also to be of even more general advantage that you shall impose on all the citizens of the country, whatever their situation in life, some responsibility in regard to administering the affairs which concern them, whether they are taxed and rated or not. The people, rich and poor, are concerned in matters affecting their sanitary condition and efficient Local Government of every kind, and you cannot limit the principle of that representation or of that responsibility which exists in reference to these things by merely asking the question whether rates and taxes fall upon the people concerned. In saying this I go at once to what seems to me the most serious blot on the proposal of the Lord Advocate—I allude to what he said as to the service franchise. He says it is to be provided by this Bill that persons in occupation, who are only nominally rated, shall be able to get themselves put upon the list of ratepayers; and they, no doubt, when they are in service will enter into some arrangement with the person in whose service they are. He conveyed to the House that they will possibly put themselves in some better position for getting the benefit of the franchise. If there be any analogy between what has taken place in England and what is to take place in Scotland under this Bill, it will not have the least effect of that kind, because, as has been said over and over again with reference to the representation of the people, that where the occupation that does not mean physical occupation but a mere technical occupation, like that of a servant as the occupation of his master, the mere rating of the servant does not bring him within the category necessary to put him within the law as a rated occupier. If you are in earnest about the service franchise, you must provide what you have provided in regard to Parliamentary elections—that not a technical, but a physical, occupation, and an occupation of a much more general character than the Lord Advocate appears to contemplate, shall give the right to vote. You must make up your mind between two principles—whether you will exclude altogether a substantial part of the service franchise in reference to Local Government in Scotland, or whether you will take it in complete, as would be necessary if you were to extend the full benefit of the service franchise, and propose an efficient measure on the subject. Unless the Lord Advocate is prepared to go a good deal further, it seems to me that his proposal is simply nugatory. It may be that, by bringing in a large class of voters of this kind, you will go somewhat beyond the principle of taxation and representation going hand-in-hand; but I affirm that, unless you take the step I suggest, you will not pass any measure of Local Government for Scotland which will either be satisfactory to hon. Members on this side of the House or to the people of Scotland. You will not extend the area very much unless you draw the elective area sufficiently wide to make it coincide, or nearly coincide, with the people whose interests are immediately concerned. I now come to a pleasanter feature of the Bill—namely, that which relates to District Committees. This is certainly better than what is in the English Act. It was not the fault of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie) that in the English Act of last year District Committees were not dealt with as is now proposed in the case of Scotland. It was, I believe, originally contemplated that there should be such District Committees, but the matter was held over for further consideration. I should certainly like to know a little more clearly before coming to a conclusion on the subject, what are to be the functions of these District Committees, and how much they are to take from the functions of the Parochial Boards? The Lord Advocate will probably say that this will only be understood when we get the Bill and criticize it. I shall certainly listen with great interest to what are to be the functions those District Committees are to exercise; because it appears to me that unless they are to take over a number of those functions which the Lord Advocate has not yet given us any indication of, they will not satisfactorily discharge the duties which we desire to see carried out. There is another provision which I think very bad in spirit — that is the two registers. I know the difficulties of the attempt to assimilate the Parliamentary and local franchise. I know it has not been done in England yet, but I know of no reason why it should not be done in Scotland. Surely, when we are having a comprehensive Bill of this kind, it would have been in the power of the Government to have made the measure still more comprehensive by putting the two registers as nearly as possible on one footing. If it be said that the Parliamentary register would not include all that it is intended to bring within the scope of the Local Government register, then it would have been better to have had a supplemental register for Local Government than to have had a wholly distinct register, with different franchises and with different ways of dealing with the matter, and which can only lead to litigation, confusion, and expense. I say nothing about licensing. I do not think it is altogether to the advantage of those who desire that the licensing should be excluded from popular local control, that this step should have been taken, because the exclusion will only lead to further agitation upon the part of temperance reformers in Scotland for the constitution of separate Boards, dealing with liscenses on a separate basis from that of the general Boards. As regards the Parochial Boards, which is to be constituted partly of owners and partly of occupiers, I will say nothing more than has been said by my right hon. Friend the Member for the Stirling Burghs, excepting this, that it does seem to me to be a rather retrograde step, when you have already, in the case of the County Councils, got over those scruples, not to put the Parochial Boards on the same basis as the County Councils. As to the provisions with regard to school fees, we recognize them as a step forward, and we thank the Lord Advocate for having gone so far. Then there is another proposition which seemed to me to be a curious one, that is the proposition as to capital expenditure and the appointment of a Joint Committee of Control of owners of property who are to bear the incidence of this capital expenditure and of the representatives of the ordinary electoral body in the country. Sir, what would be said in London if you proposed to control the operations of the County Council by constituting a Joint Committee representing partly the owners of property to control the capital expenditure? The Lord Advocate would say that the most, if not the whole of those rates fall upon the owners. Yes, but the rates levied in London on the occupiers, not in all cases, but in nine cases out of ten, come out of the rents in the long run. To me it seems that to prevent the persons who represent the Government of the country having control of the capital expenditure, is a very retrograde step. The proposals with regard to Private Bills are certainly a step forward. It is right that the inquiry should take place in Scotland, but I do think that many people will be disappointed that there is no proposition in this Bill for an extension of the Provisional Order system. I do not want the details of these Bills to be thrashed out in this House, nor will I be considered disrespectful when I say that there are not 20 per cent of the Members of this House who care, or will ever care, anything about Scotch Private Bills. The details of Private Bills could in three cases out of four be settled on the spot; and I do think it would have been very much better if the Lord Advocate had given some power of remitting Provisional Orders to a Commission sitting dow in Scotland, than to have observed a procedure which cannot be altogether satisfactory, and must lead to nearly as great expense as in the case under the present system, simply to perceive the nominal control which Parliament exercises over Private Bill legislation. I am perfectly certain before many years are over, we shall recognize in one form or another the principle of sending these Private Bills to Scotland to be dealt with by people who are more competent to consider them than we can be. Having said so much, I wish to join in what I am sure is the expression of satisfaction on this side of the House—though we shall have to enforce these points of criticism to the best of our ability—with the thorough-going and comprehensive set of Bills which we have before us. It will be our duty, in no spirit of carping criticism, to make amendments, but, at the same time to accept the Bills in an appreciative spirit as a good foundation to build upon.

Mr. M. STEWART (Kirkcudbrightshire): Everybody must agree that under the Bills a great advance will be made in popular government. They deal purely with Scotch questions, which they settle on Scotch lines; and they are based on the principle of extending representative and popular government in Scotland. There are one or two things, however, which I regret to find are not includeed in the scheme of the Government, and especially that the Licensing Question is left untouched. With regard to Private Bills, the most expensive part of the business will be dealt with in Scotland, where the present system is held up as a great grievance. Private proprietors who are anxious to benefit the districts in which they live often find their good intentions thwarted owing to the great expense which would be incurred in approaching Parliament. I am glad to think that the influence of the Parochial Boards will be strengthened rather than diminished. There has been a strong feeling among the people in favour of a reform of this kind, and one of the most satisfactory parts of the measure will be the proposal to assist the local rates from the probate duty. I could have wished that the Government had seen their way to continuing the name of Commissioners of Supply, which is so familiar and is held in general favour. The economy practised in the Scotch counties will contrast favourably with that in any county in the Kingdom, and my own county is at the head of the list. Seeing that the assessment only amounts to one penny in the pound, if it continues at that sum we are not likely to be worse off with a County Council than we have been with Commissioners of Supply. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his very explicit statement on this abstruse subject, and I would express a hope that the House will see its way to pass the Bills into law at an early day.

Mr. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I do not propose to trouble the House at any length upon the numerous questions which arise from the clear and admirable statement of the Lord Advocate, but I wish to say a word or two upon a question in which I take a special interest—namely, the application of the Probate Duty in Scotland. I heartily rejoice that the Government have abandoned the proposal of last year as to the application of the duty. The proposal then was to allocate it to the relief of rates; but such an allocation would have given no relief to any class of people in Scotland. I, therefore, congratulate the Government upon having made up their minds to allocate it to the purpose of free education. There are, however, one or two points upon which

I think the House would be glad to have more specific information. According to the financial statement of the right hon. Gentleman, the sum of about £171,000 will be allocated to the abolition of school fees, but the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman will fall short of the required amount by £130,000. I do not quite understand whether the Government contemplate the application of the money to the entire abolition of the school fees or to their reduction. The figures of the right hon. Gentleman are open to some criticism. The total sum from licences in Scotland is £323,000; and against that there are to be put the Imperial grants which are withdrawn, including £36,000 which is given to the roads, beyond what was given in 1876-7, and which creates an unfair distinction between the counties and the burghs. That sum I claim for free education. There is a sum of £30,000 to be given for the Highlands, but as the Government have not informed us how we are to spend the money, I can express no opinion upon it. I do not see why any special grant should be given to the Highlands. I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that the money should be kept in hand for nine months; we should then have a nest egg of £170,000 or £180,000, and if we abolished school fees in 1890 we should have that sum in hand to make up the difference between £240,000 and the sum required for the complete payment of school fees. That sum would be quite sufficient to make up the difference. If the House sees its way to provide without any fresh taxation for a period of four years, we should then be entitled to take into consideration the enormous improvement there would be in the average attendance of children in the schools, and the consequent increase which we should have from the Government grant, an improvement which, judging from the results of the abolition of school fees in foreign countries, I cannot put at less than 10 per cent. If that result were realized before four years have elapsed, we should be earning something like £50,000 a year more than the Government grant, and whatever hiatus there might be between the total of this grant and the total of the sum now represented by school fees would be so infinitesimal that it would not make any material addition to the rates. I trust that the Government having gone so far, in deference to the almost unanimous opinion of Scotland, will not in a niggardly spirit deal with the details, but will give as much money as may be necessary to avoid any addition to the School Board rate. I think the term "denominational schools" is unfortunate in its application to Scotland. In Scotland all of our schools are denominational in this sense, that every school, whether Board school, Catholic school or Episcopalian school, teaches Christianity and the shorter Catechism. The distinction is not between denominational and undenominational schools, but between those managed and controlled by popular authority, and those managed and controlled by private individuals. The tendency of the School Boards so far has been to absorb the denominational schools, but another and more difficult matter has been the 63,000 children who are Catholics. I do not know if it would be satisfactory to those who belong to that religion, or what will be the view taken of the question by the people of Scotland; but bearing in mind the fact that all the Board schools are denominational schools in the sense of teaching religion, if the Catholics of Scotland are willing to put their schools under School Board control, it would not be unreasonable that some provision should be made, in a district where there is a sufficient number of Catholics to justify it, for the teaching of religion by Catholic teachers just as in other districts the Presbyterian religion is taught now by Presbyterian teachers. That, however, is merely a suggestion by the way. Whatever view may be taken upon the thorny question of religious education, I trust that on neither side of the House will anything be done to prevent the Government from carrying out their plan in whole or in part. Before I sit down I wish to say a word on the question of Private Bill legislation. Although there is a great deal to be said for the proposal which the Lord Advocate has put forward, I venture to say with the greatest possible respect for him and those who entertain his views that he is legislating in the wrong direction. If hon. Members will analyze the Private Bill legislation for Scotland they will find that about 75 per cent of it is railway legislation and only about 20 per cent. legislation by the towns, burghs, and other public authorities. I recognize the grievance under which corporations suffer under the present system, but the true direction in which reform ought to be sought is so to improve the general legislation, and so to increase the powers of municipalities and public authorities that the occasions will be rare on which it will be necessary to apply for any Private Bills whatever. I think it is a great mistake to encourage Private Bill legislation, which after all is the legislation of privilege, and I believe it is possible to avoid the necessity of applying to Parliament at all. With respect to the bearing of the scheme on the railway companies, I confess that I see no advantage in it either to them or to the public. It seems to me that the railway system of Scotland is so interwoven with the railway system of England that special legislation for Scotland would give no advantage, nor would it be economical. If, therefore, the companies think they would be better under the present system, I should be prepared to support their contention in that respect. It is a curious fact that the only part of the work of this House which, by universal consent, is done well—namely, the work in Committee upstairs—is the one which the Government are going to take away from the House of Commons and confer on a tribunal, small in number, which will be apt to fall into a narrow and professional groove.

*Mr. J. B. BALFOUR (Clackmannan and Kinross): Allow me to add my congratulations to those which have already been offered to the Lord Advocate upon the admirable clearness of the statement he has submitted, and also for the comprehensive spirit in which the Bills have been prepared. I do not think it would be appropriate, at this moment, to enter into a detailed criticism of the proposals which have been made. We shall see the Bills in the course of a few days and will then have an opportunity of considering the details more fully. There are points, of course, which will require grave consideration in the later stages of the Bills, but there are one or two matters to which reference has already been made upon which I should like to say one or two words. The first of these is in regard to the manner in which the contribution hitherto made from the county rate in Scotland—the assessment levied by the Commissioners of Supply on owners—ought to be dealt with, for I am not entirely satisfied that the ingenious method in which the Lord Advocate proposes to deal with it is altogether free from objection. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman will, in my opinion, have to be carefully considered in order to prevent the stereotyping the present amount of that tax upon the land without having regard to the possible future increase in the value of the land. The proposal, as I understand, is to ascertain the present value of that tax—to leave it a permanent burden upon owners, but to divide any increase in the tax equally between owners and occupiers, thereby relieving land at the expense of labour. Another point is the proposal to keep the Commissioners of Supply in life for one or two purposes only, and to provide that all capital expenditure shall in future in counties be dealt with by a body consisting of a Standing Committee to be made up of seven County Councillors and seven Commissioners of Supply. That is a proposition to deal with capital expenditure in a very exceptional way. No doubt there is the precedent of the Roads and Bridges Act, for putting capital expenditure on a different footing from current expenditure, but, as far as I know, that is the only instance of such a thing—it stands alone. It is a very anomalous mode of treating these important matters to have separate tribunals for the purpose of dealing with capital expenditure as against expenditure which is not capital. There is another matter which it is proposed to hand over to the Joint Committee, and that is the control of the police. There, again, it appears to me that very careful consideration will be needed, because we know that the Burgh Councils have hitherto administered their police to the satisfaction of all concerned, and some very distinct cause must be shown why the County Councils should not have the like full power of managing their police. And now I come to the question of the service franchise, which in some parts of the country will prove a very important factor. Take, for instance, the case of the great mining communities, in which by far the larger proportion of the number of Parliamentary voters vote on the service franchise. Surely it would be unfortunate if they were to have no power of taking part in the election of County Councils. I hope the House will carefully consider this matter, for it does not seem to me to be at all clear that the Parliamentary franchise and the County Council franchise should not be the same. I will say nothing now with regard to the licensing question beyond that I am sure very many of us are exceedingly desirous that the question should be dealt with in some satisfactory way in these Bills, because undoubtedly there is no matter which is more closely connected with the daily life and well-being of a community than the licensing question. But I will say nothing about that, as we are told it is not to be comprehended in this Bill. There is, however, the point as to the Parochial Boards. It seems to me that there, again, it is exceedingly doubtful whether there can be any sufficient reason given for the restrictive franchise which is proposed. If I understood the right hon. Gentleman's statement aright, it was to the effect that, in order to give a qualification for a seat on the Parochial Board, a person must be an owner or an occupier of not less than £50 assessment.

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: In the ordinary case, one-half of the Board will be elected by owners. In those parishes in which the owners are so few in number that an election by owners would be inappropriate, the Board of Supervision will nominate that half of the Board, selecting owners, occupiers over £50, or other fit persons.

*Mr. J. B. BALFOUR: This is certainly a very singular mode of electing such a body. In our School Board system in Scotland—a body which has certainly to perform very delicate functions, and to administer large funds—the members are elected on a perfectly free and open franchise. It seems to me, therefore, it will have to be carefully considered whether it would not be wise and just to give a franchise for the Parochial Boards similar to the School Board franchise—or, at any rate, to the County Council franchise. The School Board franchise is limited to £40 occupiers, and even now there is a strong feeling that that restriction should be removed. I am glad it is proposed to deal with the important subject of Private Bill legislation, and I hope that it is not proposed to interfere in any way with the Provisional Order system, under which local inquiries are now conducted satisfactorily at a cheap rate. I can assure the Lord Advocate and Her Majesty's Government that the Bills will receive fair and dispassionate consideration on this side of the House, and that there is every desire that they may pass into law with such Amendments as may be thought right.

*Mr. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I may, I hope, join in the chorus of congratulation with which the House has received these Bills. Certainly, the right hon. Gentleman has introduced a very important subject, in a manner entirely worthy of himself, and in a manner which has made it very much more easy for us to understand and discuss them than it would have been if he had not displayed this great lucidity of exposition. Sir, my right hon. Friend said this was a subject which must be dealt with in a comprehensive manner. I am glad he has so accurately stated the principle on which Bills of this kind should proceed, and if I ventured to make any general criticism to make on the scheme which has been put before us, it would be that that principle has not been carried to its logical conclusion, and that we might have a still more simple and comprehensive plan if the right hon. Gentleman would only make a few alterations in his scheme. Sir, I think it is matter for great congratulation, in the first place, that the Government have adopted the principle which they have done in the election and constitution of the County Councils, and that in spite of any temptation to the contrary they have unreservedly adopted a popular franchise. I heartily congratulate them on taking a step from which beneficent consequences must flow. But, Sir, I complain that the principle and simplicity of the whole plan has not been followed out in all its details, and I would ask the House for a moment to look at the matter in this way. When we are talking about County Government, we refer chiefly to the spending of the rates which are raised in the counties. That is the chief business of county administration. Now, it is worth while for the House to bear in mind that the money which is administered by the Commissioners of Supply at present, and the administration of which it is proposed to transfer to the new County Councils, is really a very small portion of the money raised; and accordingly if we do no more than transfer to County Councils elected on a popular franchise the rates which the Commissioners of Supply now administer, and give the rest to other Boards elected on an imperfect franchise, we only carry out the system of County Government reform to a limited extent. I do not suppose that the rates which are administered by the Commissioners of Supply exceed more than 14 or 15 per cent. of the county rates, and therefore I am anxious that Government should consider whether it is not possible not only to embrace in their scheme the Commissioners of Supply, but also to apply the same franchise to the Parochial Boards by whom the greatest amount of money in the county is raised; and, further, to draw into their scheme the School Boards which raise and expend a considerable proportion of money. To pass to another point, there can surely be no reason for keeping up the Commissioners of Supply for special purposes in the way proposed by the Government for checking and taking part in capital expenditure by County Councils? I would suggest that that part of the Bill could be easily dropped; it is a part which it will prove exceedingly difficult to defend. Let us assume for a moment that the proposal is adopted, that the present amount of rates the owners pay should be stereotyped, and all future additions be divided—is not that sufficient security, without providing that the Commissioners of Supply should be joined with the County Council in matters of capital expenditure? If the capital expenditure involves an addition to the rates, it will fall equally on the owners and occupiers. And, again, the burghs have controlled and managed their police in so satisfactory a manner; surely that should encourage the Government to entrust the administration of the force to the County Councils. What the people of Scotland desire is not merely to popularize the constitution of one single body which administers only a small portion of the affairs of the county, but to reform the whole county constitution and system of administration from top to bottom, so that they may be put into harmony and form a symmetrical whole. County Councils, Parochial Boards, and District Committees should all stand on the same franchise, and be parts of a systematic and organic whole. Local administration requires three groups of bodies for parishes, districts, and counties; and as Parochial Boards and School Boards are recent creations, it would be easy to make any necessary change in their constitutions for the purpose of adapting them to a general scheme. There is much in the Bill that can be welcomed; but there are many important defects, which, however, may be easily remedied without marring in any degree the symmetry of the whole.

Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh, S.): I wish to add my share to the congratulations to the right hon. Gentleman on the extremely clear way in which he explained the principles of his Bills, and on the manner in which he secured the interest of hon. Members on both sides for an hour and a half. I am not going to allude to any subject dealt with by other speakers; but I desire elucidation on one point. The principle of the English Bill was that the county franchise should be assimilated to the municipal franchise, and the Lord Advocate proposes, on the whole, to follow that principle; but he makes one somewhat essential departure from it in giving to the service franchise voter who has no vote in a borough the privilege of becoming a county voter under certain conditions. The important question arises whether the same privilege will be given to the service franchise voters in boroughs, and, if so, whether it will not follow that the lodgers in boroughs, a much more numerous and important class than the service franchise holder, must not also be put on the municipal list. If so, I shall appeal to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board to know if he is prepared to copy in England the amended provisions of the Scotch measure? This raises a serious Constitutional question, and the House will be glad of an answer from both Ministers.

*Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith): The very admirable speech—which was appreciated on this side of the House no less than on the other—of my right hon. Friend the Lord Advocate acquired additional interest not only from the indication it gave of the attitude of the Government towards the reform of local government in Scotland, but from the terse and luminous summary of the past history of local government in Scotland with which the right hon. Gentleman prefaced his remarks. As a Commissioner of Supply, I can only say that if I had any regret that my duties are deceased, it would be that I am so much better qualified to perform them than I ever was before. The Lord Advocate has spoken of the basis of his scheme as if it must be exceptionally Scotch. I hope he will follow up that admirable train of reasoning, and agree at a later stage to allow the Bills to be referred to a Committee of Scotch Members. I do not think that English Members who have to listen to the debates on these Bills are likely to be more interested in them than I was in the English Local Government Bill of last Session, and I believe a Committee of Scotch Members would be the natural outcome of the right hon. Gentleman's speech; indeed, with a little more attention paid to the sentiment of national feeling, I have no doubt we should soon see a great improvement in the conduct of Scotch affairs. As to the areas of local government mentioned in the Bill, so far as burghs are concerned, some of the smaller ones ought to be merged into the larger areas, because they have populations which, in many instances, can only be compared with that of Old Sarum. In one or two cases, such as the Hebrides, special provision must be made, because it would be unreasonable to expect representatives to go from the Hebrides to their county town. Commissioners of Supply have, no doubt, discharged their duties well; but, as they are going to disappear partially, it is a pity they do not disappear altogether. The purposes for which they are to survive will scarcely bear examination. There is no doubt that in some counties some means of safeguarding the finances and the efficiency of the police force might be found very desirable; and, if that be so, I think there might be some provision similar to that in the English Bill, restraining the County Councils from running into excessive debt. I do not, however, wish to go into details at this stage of the discussion. As to the officials which it is proposed to leave in the first County Council elected under the new franchise, I do not know that there is a great deal in that, but I think it may just as well be left out. If they are good men they will be returned on that account, and I think the right hon. Gentleman might have trusted to the common sense of the electors in the matter. It is not a necessary provision of the Bill, and it might arouse a certain amount of hostile popular feeling. But the really important point as to the election of the County Councils is the adoption of the service franchise. I understand the Lord Advocate wishes to encourage farm servants and others to take part in local affairs. No doubt we ought to exert every means in our power to secure the development of local self-government in Scotland, and to accustom people in the country districts to manage their own affairs. But I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Parochial Boards are really the only bodies on which farm servants and people in a small way of business can be expected to sit in order to take a part in county affairs; and if we desire to secure the good which may be derived from local government as an educational system, we ought to press for the widest possible extension of the franchise. What we really want is the Parliamentary franchise. The franchise should be the same for every kind of public body that is elected, either for imperial or for local purposes. There are many matters connected with the franchise which are of goeat interest; for example, there is the question whether women will be capable of sitting on the Scotch County Councils. I am sorry, Sir, that some means have not been taken for dealing with the licensing question. I had hoped that, either in this Bill or by some other Bill, the people of Scotland would have been given the control of their licensing system. Justices of the Peace might be equally well swept away in Scotland as the Commissioners of Supply. I, indeed, think it is absolutely necessary to find some other system by which the licensing system may be regulated. The only other specific point to which I wish to allude has reference to the School Boards. Now I am exceedingly sorry the right hon. Gentleman has not seen his way to merge some of these Boards. The present system of small School Boards is extremely unsatisfactory. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the disadvantages of continual elections, but if he had seen his way to merge these Boards he would have done away with the necessity of multiplied elections, and simplified matters considerably. I do not think it would have been a very great chapter to have undertaken. The cumulative vote is not one that is appreciated in Scotland, and one which will have to go before long in any case. I am delighted that, upon the educational question, the Lord Advocate has, to a limited extent, declared himself virtually to be in favour of free education. I hope that, in many ways, the system of Private Bill legislation, to which the right hon. and learned Gentleman has referred, will remain as complete as possible. We cannot give too much local power in dealing with purely Private Bills, because there is no matter in which the people of Scotland are more interested, in which they stimulate the zeal of their Representatives more keenly, than the nuisance and ruinous expense of Private Bill legislation. In conclusion, I have only to say that we, on this side of the House, will give the most loyal support to the right hon. and learned Gentleman in the conduct of his Bill.

*Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I desire, as the Representative of a large county constituency, which is deeply interested in this Bill, to express my great satisfaction with the general lines on which the Bill is drawn. It is, indeed, a great satisfaction to us that the Lord Advocate has exceeded our expectations in respect to the reform of local government in Scotland. It is quite clear, from the statement of the Lord Advocate, that he will have in the conduct of the Bill through the House the general assistance of Scotch Members, no matter in what quarter of the House they sit. It has been my fortune to have a good deal to do with municipal government as well as county government, and I must express my regret that the system of administering the police, which has worked so well in the large centres of population, has not been carried in its entirety into this Bill. The Lord Advocate cannot hide from himself the fact that there is in all parts of the House satisfaction with this Bill, except upon those points in regard to which he has pursued what he himself calls a half-and-half policy. Why should he be afraid to trust the police to the County Council? In such centres as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen the administration of the police has been in the hands of the Councils, and it is impossible for him to say that it has been otherwise than entirely satisfactory. He has been a little halting in his trust of the people. If the Conveners whom he wishes to preserve have been popular Conveners, and have shown administrative ability, why is he afraid they will not be popularly elected in the case of the new Boards? I hope the Lord Advocate will reconsider the points in which he has admitted he is pursuing a half-and-half policy, and that he will still further extend the popularity of this great measure by doing away with its manifest defects. I cannot see why the right hon. and learned Gentleman should be afraid to trust the County Councils with the administration of free education. Nothing is more deprecated in Scotland than the commitment of any administrative work to permanent officials. The Board of Supervision in Scotland is merely a permanent official. It is not a Board, however well it has acted, that is at all appreciated as a popular Board. Its interference with small local bodies is probably necessary, but when we come to deal with such large bodies as County Councils I see no reason why the Lord Advocate should be halting in his policy and retain certain powers for the permanent officials of the Education Department. The Bill will be keenly discussed in Scotland during the Easter Recess, and I hope the Lord Advocate will, at least, keep an open mind on the points in dispute, and join with hon. Members upon the Opposition Benches in the desire that the Bill should be made satisfactory to the whole of Scotland, and a measure which shall be of a popular character, and settle the question of county government without amendment for many years to come. I trust he will not cling too tightly to any preconceived notions on what are called the minor parts of the Bill. We look with jealousy upon the question of proprietors retaining a certain share of power. There is no doubt whatever that taxation falls in the main upon the industrial classes and those who make a profit out of the land. As a general principle, it is very fair that, on the whole, taxation should be divided between proprietor and tenant. But in making that fair division, as he intends to do, in all future transactions, it will be found that there will be no injustice done to proprietors if the increase of taxation falls equally upon both, and if he gives the administration to the electors. I am glad to think that, as far as possible, there is to be one collection of taxation, and I hope the right hon. and learned Gentleman will see his way to make one register. If we had one register for both Parliamentary and local elections, and one collection for both Imperial and local taxes, we should make a great saving in the country, and render local administration far more effective. I agree with the criticisms as well as with the commendations of the Bill from this side of the House, and I assure the Lord Advocate he may reckon upon my humble assistance to make this measure worthy of his acknowledged ability.

MR. W. SINCLAIR (Falkirk): I desire to congratulate the Lord Advocate on the very lucid and able speech in which he has introduced the Bill. The people of Scotland will be glad to know that they are not to have Aldermen inflicted upon them. The proposal of District Committees of the Council rather than District Councils themselves will, I think, be found to be a very admirable suggestion, and one that will be acceptable to the people of Scotland. Another valuable suggestion is that of Joint Committees of different Councils, who can meet to discuss questions of common interest. I should like to ask the Lord Advocate when the Bills will be printed and delivered to Members, and whether there will be a sufficient number of copies at our disposal to enable us to send the Bills to those of our constituents who take an active interest in the questions?

*DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College Div.): I must congratulate the Lord Advocate not only upon the lucidity of his statement, but upon the extraordinary conversion of the Conservative Party to ultra-Radicalism which has enabled him to make his statement. I cannot help thinking that the conversion has some connection with the notice in favour of Home Rule for Scotland which the hon. Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark) has on the Paper for to-morrow, and the support that motion has received in Scotland. Certainly, I think the Bill, with a little cutting and carving, will make a first-class Radical measure; and even though it may not be so cut and carved in passing through the House now, it certainly will be when the other side come into power. I must especially congratulate the right hon. Gentleman upon the conversion of his Party to free education. When I, eight or ten years ago, brought forward a Bill on the subject, it was looked upon as a ridiculous "fad," utterly detrimental to, and subversive of, our best educational interests. I think there is very little to be said on behalf of the proposal to refer matters affecting capital expenditure to a Joint Committee, consisting of seven County Councillors and seven Commissioners of Supply, with the Sheriff presiding, but there is not the shadow of an excuse for entrusting such a hybrid body with the management of the police. There is not the smallest excuse for not following the precedent of the Municipal Councils in this particular. It would have made the Bill more symmetrical and accordant with the practice in Town Councils if the Bill had provided for the election of bailies by the County Councils, to whom the judicial functions of Justices of the Peace could have been handed over, as they are in burghs. The proposal of the right hon. Gentleman to leaven the District Committees with two members of the Parochial Board is most vicious; but I approve of the consolidation of rates, and trust the system will be imitated in burghs. It would be as well if the Lord Advocate were to follow the practice pursued in London a little further and make the collection of rates by quarterly instalments. Let me call attention to the fact that it is rather a dangerous omen for the introduction of a Bill to be received with universal approbation, because the expectations excited throughout the country may not be realized when the provisions of the Bill are definitely known. It is as well to warn the Lord Advocate that on the question of denominational education he may not find it all plain sailing. There is a third Bill the Lord Advocate seeks to introduce—the Parochial Boards Bill. That, undoubtedly, is a purely retrograde measure so far as the large towns are concerned. For years past I myself have introduced a Bill on the subject which I consider to be much simpler, and which I venture to say is likely to become law sooner than that introduced by the Lord Advocate. In great towns there exists to a certain extent a representative element in Parochial Boards, elected by owners and occupiers jointly, and as the latter greatly outnumber the former, the Board is elected on a sound though complex basis. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to subvert all that by dividing the electors into two classes, and allowing each class to elect half the Parochial Board. I believe that when this comes to be understood in towns there will be such an amount of opposition as will prevent the Bill becoming law. In certain counties the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman may be an improvement on the absurd existing constitution of Parochial Boards, but the proposal to place the election of half the Members of these Boards in the hands of the Board of Supervision is absolutely preposterous. There are on that Board half-a dozen Sheriffs, who sit on it *ex officio.* It has no representative character; it is not responsible to Parliament, and complaints have again and again been levelled against it. With regard to the Private Bill portion of the scheme, I have only one observation to make. When, a couple of years ago, a Bill was passed through this House—I think it was the Criminal Procedure Bill—there were some clauses in it devoted to a re-arrangement and increase of the salaries of Judges of the Court of Session, and the then Lord Advocate, in explaining the provisions of that Bill, told us in connection with this proposal that he had in view for purposes of Private Bill legislation the imposition of additional duties on these Judges, and pay, therefore, was given in consideration of these prospective additional duties. I trust, therefore, that in bringing forward this Bill which throws upon them this additional duty, the Government will remember that the Judges have already been paid, by anticipation, and that we shall not have financial clauses asking for further increase of their salary on this account.

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I think it is now desirable that I should refer to some of the points raised, and in doing so let me return my sincere thanks for the more than courtesy with which I have been treated in my duty of submitting the Government proposals, and the conciliatory spirit in which those proposals have been received by all who have spoken. I will touch upon the several points that seem to demand an answer now, and, seeing the hon. Member for South Edinburgh in his place I will refer first to the service franchise, which he made subject of remark. I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour) is not present, because he could have furnished some information of an interesting kind. The right hon. Gentleman asks me as to the state of the law in reference to service franchise voters in Municipal Elections, and I have to say the existing law is doubtful in this sense—that in certain towns the service franchise people are *de facto* on the register in most of the large towns; but in some—I may mention, for instance, Dunfermline—they are not, owing to the legal opinion expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan, that they are not entitled to be on the municipal register. Indirectly we may clear up the law on this point by keeping on all those who are on the register and putting on those who are not on, but are otherwise qualified for the municipal register. The right hon. Gentleman follows up his question by asking what we propose to do in regard to burghs as regards the roll, and I say we propose the same terms as in counties. These terms, let me say—and I answer the hon. Member for Haddington (Mr. Haldane)—are: — We desire to enable service franchise holders to come on the County Council roll, and they can do so by giving notice of their desire to contribute to the County Council rates. In doing so they will be entered on the register. Then I am asked whether we propose to open up another vista, as to which my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Bill will answer for himself at the right time, but I may say now that we do not propose that in these elections lodgers should exercise a vote. I am asked how we justify the control of the capital expenditure in counties, while in burghs there is no such control. The first and most obvious answer is that in burghs occupiers are rated equally with owners. The functions of the District Committee will relate to roads and public highways; but possibly, if experience should justify it, other functions may be added. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. J. B. Balfour) said he hoped our proposals upon Private Bill legislation would not do away with the beneficial system of local inquiry which takes place when Provisional Orders are being obtained. We do not interfere with these inquiries unless, and until, a Provisional Order comes as a Bill before Parliament. Various remonstrances have been addressed to the Government on account of some of the claims, and which are apparently likely to lead to discussion, and, as I do not wish now to enter upon controversial argument, I will not refer to them except as to one point raised by the hon. Member for East Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont). The hon. Member, taking an interest in the subject which is well known, has stated a claim for part of the money which at present is proposed should be devoted to other purposes than education, £36,000 for Roads, and £30,000 for the Highlands. On this point, if the hon. Gentleman will wait until he can see the provisions, I think he will see that the arrangements are more or less of a complicated character not to be entered upon piece-meal, and when we have not the means of full discussion before us. Lastly, I am asked a much simpler question when the Bill will be in the hands of Members? On that I can only say that I do not anticipate any long delay, and hope it will be ready during this week.

*Mr. C. S. PARKER (Perth): There are one or two questions I should like to put to the Lord Advocate. I am sure it must be his desire that the country should have the opportunity as soon as possible of understanding not only the broad principles but the working of his proposals, and though I join with every other hon. Member who has spoken in congratulating him on the extreme clearness and lucidity of the account he gave us of them, it was, of course, as a question merely of time, impossible within the period at his disposal to make clear everything about these four Bills. I desire information first as to the Private Bill legislation, and next as to the school fees. I assume that the Commission is intended to supersede the Committees of both Houses of Parliament. But will there remain possible any such appeal as at present exists from one House to the other on the details of Bills? It seems to me that some appeal might very well remain in the event of parties not being satisfied with the decision of the tribunal, but I should be glad to know whether that is the view of the Government. If there is to be anything like an effective appeal this can only be provided by the House still occasionally appointing a strong Committee to review clauses, instead of the whole House dealing with them. A strong Committee would be more easily appointed under the new system because the House will be relieved of much ordinary Committee work. I should like to know also whether it is contemplated that the Judge who is to form part of the tribunal shall give the whole of his time. The other question on which I should like a little more information is a totally different one, namely, as to school fees. Will all that is proposed appear in the Bills which are going before the country during the Easter Recess? I presume there is no intention to compulsorily abolish fees, either in Board or other schools. But how is it proposed to apportion the relief from fees among the different schools? There is the embarrassing denominational question. I do not think that the people of Scotland, though they are mostly Protestant, will support such utterances as we have heard lately in public about making an absolute stand against giving their fair share of such relief to Catholic schools. The large Protestant majority would not be so unjust as to say, "We will take this probate duty to remit fees in our Protestant schools, but we will let none of it be given to the Catholics; we will drive them into the Board Schools, however contrary that may be to their religious principles." Again, there was a plan put before the public lately by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain)—who proposed to ascertain what amount of fees at present is being paid at the several schools, or classes of schools, and to distribute the amount of money to be given in exactly the same proportion. That would be exceedingly unfair in its operation, and more so in Scotland than in England. In Glasgow there are Board Schools—take the case of Garnett Hill School for example—where the education is so high that parents whose children might go to the Academies send them to these schools, to prepare more cheaply for the University, and for the Indian Civil Service and other examinations. On Mr. Chamberlain's principle, these schools would receive a much larger share than the Catholic schools and others where the poorest children go, which would be very unfair. I should be glad to know whether, in the first place, the grant will go to pay the fees of those poor children whose parents at present have to apply to the Parochial Boards. In that way some relief would be given to the general ratepayer as well as to the parents. That would be equitable; and, next to that, the fees to be provided might go for those in the lower standards, which would include most of the poorest. Lastly, passing to another subject, I think there is considerable force in what was said by the hon. Member for the College Division with respect to the additional functions which it is proposed to assign to the Board of Supervision. That Board, and as it is not a representative body, as the hon. Member said, is not represented in this House—at any rate, it is only represented in the way that the Prisons Board or any other Department in Scotland is represented; that is to say, when the Secretary for Scotland is in the other House, we can only regard them as represented by the Lord Advocate. But, considering the composition of the Board of Supervision, I do think it unwise to throw on them in this Bill the additional function of determining the number of members to sit on the Parochial Boards, or, still more, such a function as to determine, in parishes where the owners are few, which of the occupiers shall sit on the Board in the interest of the owners. If that is done at all, I should like to know whether it is proposed that it should be done subject to some active control by the Secretary for Scotland.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I join in what has been said as to the clear statement of the Lord Advocate; but while his statement of the Bill has been in every respect clear, at the same time there are points on which a considerable amount of difference of opinion will exist in Scotland. The majority of the people of Scotland belong to the Liberal Party, and necessarily they will look at this Bill from a Liberal point of view. Now, one of the points I was very sorry to see the Lord Advocate did not go in for was the Parochial Boards being entirely elective bodies. He seems in some way to mistrust the ratepayers as a body, and to insist on one-half of the Board being elected by the owners and the other half by the occupiers. Now, I do not think there is any reason for distrusting the ratepayers in the matter of the Parochial Boards. As has been already pointed out, the School Boards are elected by the ratepayers without distinction of class, and the School Board members who have been elected have belonged generally to what might be termed the owners' class. Although you have representation without distinction of class, yet, in point of fact, when the ratepayers elect representatives, they elect those who have time to devote to the work, and who have also shown capacity for the management of local affairs, and there has been no occasion whatever for treating with the slightest distrust Members who have been elected by the ordinary ratepayers. Take, for instance, the case of Parochial Boards. It is a mistake to suppose that the ratepayers' members are more likely to be lavish than the owners' members. On the contrary, all experience shows that the ratepayers' members would be more on the side of economy than even the owners' representatives; and it must also be recollected that if you are to have owners' representatives you will have distinctions on the Board which ought not to exist. You would be apt to have the Board divided half on one side and half on the other according as their individual interests might arise. I venture to say that in Scotland there will be a unanimous condemnation of the principle of class membership of Parochial Boards. There is no ground whatever for introducing so much class principle.

As regards the management of counties there can be no doubt that it may be necessary to resort to what we may term District Councils. It is evident that under the Bill the Members of these Councils as well as of the County Councils will principally belong to the owner class. Experience has shown in connection with the Road Trustees that where you have representatives of the Commissioners of Supply and representatives of ratepayers, the representatives of the ratepayers are not able to attend, and that the work devolves upon the Commissioners of Supply. The District Councils in the Counties will, practically, therefore, be managed by the owner class. That being so, I think it is a pity that the Lord Advocate should have introduced a distinction between capital outlay and ordinary maintenance, and I do not think it will be necessary to take any measures to protect the interests of the landowners. If such measures are adopted they will, I think, give rise to a great amount of friction. The system of introducing into the District Councils members from the Parochial Boards is practically introducing the system of Aldermen. A man from a Parochial Board will have the same status as one elected by thousands of ratepayers, which will militate against the honour of his position on the District Council. Besides, men will seek the portal of the Parochial Board as an entrance to the Council to save the trouble and expense of an election, and in that way the prestige of the Council will be injured. With respect to the grants for free education, there is in Scotland a greater reason for taking such a step than in England, as the compulsory age is 14, and the standard to be reached is the fifth, whereas in England the age for leaving is one year earlier and the compulsory standard to be attained is only the fourth, so that Scotch parents are deprived for one year more than English of their children's earnings. This loss will amount to £10, averaging the earnings at 4s. a week, whereas the relief which will be received on school fees at an average of 13s. a year for six years will only be £5. With regard to making education free, I venture to say that it should only be free up to Standard V.—the compulsory standard. It should not go beyond that, and it should be based on a reasonable amount of school fees. That would be found to be, perhaps, about 10s. per child in average attendance, or perhaps less, and the principle on which the Government should proceed in giving the allocation to denominational schools as well as the School Board schools should be to fix on a certain amount per child in average attendance as given out of the local rates in respect of there being no school fees exacted. With regard to those who object to the denominational schools, such as those of the Roman Catholics, getting grants in respect of the abolition of school fees, it is a mistake to suppose that those schools do not relieve the ratepayers of an enormous amount of expense, the fact being that if they were to be shut up a very heavy additional burden would fall on the local taxpayers, who would be called on to provide a largely increased number of school buildings. The ratepayers have a considerable interest in the question whether every child should be driven into the Board Schools—that interest lying in the other direction, namely, that as far as possible the children should be educated out of the Board Schools and so effect a saving in the rates. Moreover, it cannot be contended that when it is making education compulsory the State has a right to dictate the kind of religious instruction the children ought to receive. It is sufficient if the children are able to undergo an examination showing that they can comply with the particular standards they are in; but on the question whether religious education should be given in the denominational or the Board Schools the State can have no claim to interfere. There can be no right of any such interference founded on any principle of justice. With regard to the proposals made in reference to Private Bill legislation, I am not quite sure how far the system intended by the Bill would prove of advantage. It seems to me that it would simply amount to this, that you will have the Counsel in Scotland instead of keeping us under the Counsel in England, and that it is very much a question of whether the Edinburgh lawyers are anxious to appear before the Commissioners in reference to these local Bills. We have had some experience of commissions in Scotland, among them being the recent Commission on the Boundaries Bill; and with regard to that particular

Commission, I venture to say, that if the inquiry had been held in London it would have been much cheaper than it was, the fees then paid to counsel being much larger than the fees paid to counsel before Committees upstairs. Another objection to this scheme for dealing with Private Bills is that the proposal to remit the consideration of legislative enactments to Commissioners is a somewhat serious innovation on long established usage, and that in making it you will be giving rise to a practice of acting upon precedents, whereas what we expect when a Bill is brought before Parliament is that we should have the advantage of the enlightened consideration which Members of Parliament are willing to give to matters of legislation. This, however, will be set aside by the Commissioners, who will not act on the liberal and advanced notions which prevail here, but will, in the main, confine themselves to considerations founded on prescription and precedent. I think, therefore, it would be detrimental to the due progress of legislation to have our Bills judged by Commissioners, instead of, as heretofore, by those who represent the interests of the people. If there is to be a body sitting in Scotland to deal with questions of Private Bill legislation, I venture to say that it ought to be a Committee of Members of the Houses of Lords and Commons, appointed by the Committee of Selection, for in that way we should have our political interests specially represented in all matters affecting our Private Bill legislation. We should thus have so many Members of the House of Commons, and so many of the House of Lords, specially selected for the purpose, sitting as a joint Committee, hearing the evidence and arguments for and against the Bills, and judging on the principles which guide the Committees sitting upstairs. This, I maintain, would be a more workable system, and would be more likely to command the confidence of the parties concerned than the plan now proposed of dealing with these matters by Commission, because when the Bills deliberated upon by the Commissioners come up to this House there will necessarily be a considerable amount of discussion and wire-pulling, with the view of overbearing the decisions arrived at on points upon which Members of this House will differ from the Commissioners as to matters of fact or questions of expediency. These are the only observations I feel it necessary to make at this stage of the Bill. There is no doubt that it is a considerable improvement on what has hitherto been the practice in Scotland; but it is evident that a great deal more will have to be done in order to make it thoroughly satisfactory to the Scottish people. At present we cannot expect more than the mere skeleton of a measure; but it is to be hoped that in the course of time, as the County Councils get developed, we may be able to acquire much larger powers than are now suggested, combining, at the same time, efficiency with economy. There seems to me to be no reason why the County Councils should not ultimately have the revision of the Local Boards over each county, and so get rid of a considerable amount of difficulty such as has hitherto occurred. I simply point out these matters as requiring to be dealt with at some future time, and I complain that they have not been introduced into the present Bill. In conclusion, I will only add that I think the Lord Advocate has introduced a Bill which is, upon the whole, a great advance on the existing state of things, and that, in what I have said I have only indicated what I should regard as an improvement of the measure.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy): I think we all join in the congratulations that have been offered to the right hon. Gentleman the Lord Advocate on the manner in which he has introduced the Measure now before the House, although I must confess that, while listening to his impressive periods, I felt somewhat disappointed at finding that the Bill had not a larger scope. At any rate there are many on this side of the House who will agree with me in saying it is not so large a Measure as we had hoped. It is, I think, to be regretted that the Bill does not touch on matters with which it might well have dealt. For instance, it does not in any degree deal with what I may call the province of home rule or central rule in Scotland; and, further, I may say that in my opinion there is nothing in the Bill that will tend in any way to relieve the congestion of business in the British Parliament, although I hope it may bring about a considerable improvement in regard to Legislation in Scotland. It seems to me that one of the main principles of the Bill is to deprive the parishes of the little administrative power they now possess; though in this respect it is a somewhat smaller measure than the English Act. I think we might have had a plan which would have given us larger areas in which the burghs of the counties might have been united for some purposes, and I cannot but regret that no attempt has been made in the Bill to group together some of the smaller areas, such, for example, as the counties of Kinross and Clackmannan, for the purposes of the Bill. When the Lord Advocate came to speak of the unit of administration, I was in hopes he was going to make the parish the unit of administration; and what I find is done in the English Bill is to take away from the parish what little administration it possessed, under the head of sanitation, and to leave it simply an organization for the relief of the poor. It is my impression that for the administration of the smaller rural areas what is wanted is something in the nature of the village communes on the Continent, such as are to be found in France and Russia, and also in India. As regards the District Councils they are to be mere delegations from the County Councils. Let me say one word about Local Government finance, as explained in this Bill. I will not enter into the question of the so-called decentralization of finance, and the localization of taxes, but my opinion is that in Scotland, where some counties are rich and others poor, the expenses will be thrown on large and poor areas, while some of the richer counties will gain. As regards the aiding of local taxation Scotland gets only £171,000 out of the whole amount in aid of local taxation which has been given to the United Kingdom, and I think Scotland has not been treated very fairly. As regards the application of that sum, such as it is, I am one of those who have always been very strongly in favour of free education, and I rejoice to hear that in that direction Her Majesty's Government mean to make some use of this money. At the same time I fear they will find rocks ahead in the shape of this voluntary question, which is a very difficult one indeed to deal with. I was rather surprised to hear of our Parochial schools being regarded as denominational schools. In one sense they are, but the managers have the Conscience Clause, and I hope hon. Members will see no danger in the Shorter Catechism. I was taught the Shorter Catechism in my youth, and anything more appropriate to use I cannot conceive. I believe in Scotland we are rapidly becoming free from religious bigotry, and that we are approaching the time when we shall be able to supply secular teaching, leaving religious education to those whom it concerns. My feeling is this, that if people who have denominational crotchets choose to set up schools alongside the Board School, let them pay for them. Now as regards the Aldermen. The Lord Advocate said that we have no Aldermen in Scotland, but I beg to assure him that Aldermen are an ancient institution in that country. I find that there was an Alderman at the head of the burgh of Cupar several hundreds of years ago. However, the Aldermen in English counties have turned out such a failure, that I am very glad they are omitted. At the same time, I should have been very glad had the Government proposed County Bailies, who perform excellent functions, and are magistrates. I should have been very glad if the people of the counties, as in the burghs, could have elected their own magistrates. As to the Service Vote, I entirely agree with what was said in reference to it by the hon. Member for Haddington. I altogether object to the proposals of the Government with regard to the Service Vote. The Government ought either to give this Service Vote or to refuse it. It seems to me that practically the Service voter has to pay the rate. He is in the same position as a compound householder. He has his house as part remuneration, and if the landlord pays the rates, it has to be accounted for by the service holder. I hope very much that Her Majesty's Government will admit the service holders to the vote. The service holder in Scotland is a most excellent and generally a most useful man. I know a gardener who is a service holder, and who is also Chairman of the local School Board, the laird, a most excellent member of the Board, being under him. I do hope that this most useful class of men will be brought into this scheme of the Government. As regards the whole question of registration, I quite agree that there should be a coincidence between the county and the burgh register, that is to say, the county register should be based on the burgh register, and every county voter should be allowed to vote for the burgh; and you should have a supplementary list for women, if women are to be in County Councils, though I hope we shall not have them anywhere else. As to Private Bill legislation, I am very glad that Her Majesty's Government propose to make an experiment, though I am not prepared to say how far I think that experiment will be a success. I hope we shall come to what we have in some of the States of America, where distinct rules are laid down by law as to how and under what circumstances a railway may or may not be made. It would be an exceedingly difficult thing for any body of a judicial character to decide such a question as that raised the other day in reference to the Highland Railway and the railway to the West Coast of Scotland. One part of the proposal seems to me an excellent one—namely, that local Bills should be submitted to the opinion of the County Council; for instance, as to whether a railway was desirable or not. There might be some difficulty in respect of the Bills of burghs being reviewed by the County Council. As regards Railway Bills, however, I think the proposal to submit them to the opinion of a popular body is a most excellent one. I shall not detain the House longer.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to Amend the laws relating to Local Government in Scotland."

*DR. CAMERON: I wish to ask the Lord Advocate whether the results of the revision arrived at after considerable expense by the Glasgow Boundaries Commission a couple of years ago, are proposed to be revised by the Boundary Commission?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The Boundary Commission, under this Bill, will be confined to the rectification of the frontiers between burghs and counties or counties and counties. The case to which the hon. Gentleman refers does not come under that class at all.

*MR. C. S. PARKER (Perth): At what stage will the learned Lord be able to give us any further information about the scheme of school fees?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I doubt whether I am in order in answering the several interrogatories of the hon. Member; but, if it is permissible, I will answer them categorically. When a Bill is sent from one House to the other, we do not prevent the appointment by the Second House, so to speak, of a Select Committee. That is for the consideration of the House itself. The second point is that as to whether the Judge will give his whole time? Certainly he will during the progress of the inquiry, but that would not mean for the whole year. Would the Government abolish all fees? Certainly not. As to the portion of the fees to which the hon. Member referred, it is necessarily a matter, more or less, of detail. I do not know that I can say anything more useful than that our general object will be somewhat in accordance with the views of the hon. Gentleman.

*MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen): If in order, I would ask the Lord Advocate to what extent he means to relieve school fees in Scotland?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: That is not a matter which can be properly entered into at this stage. I would beg the hon. Member to observe that this is a matter which involves a considerable amount of detail in the practical working out of the methods. I think I have sufficiently indicated the principle on which the Government propose to act, and if the hon. Gentleman will reserve his judgment, I am certain he will have abundant opportunity of expressing his views.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Are the Bills in type?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: They are not ready for issue, but I do not think they will be long delayed. As I have said to an hon. Gentleman before, I hope they will be out before the end of the week.

Motion agreed to.

Question put,

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to make supplementary provisions for amending the laws relating to Local Goverment in Scotland."

Agreed to.

Question put,

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the laws relating to the election of Parochial Boards in Scotland."

Agreed.

Question put,

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the procedure in regard to private Bills relating to Scotland."

*Mr. CHILDERS (Edinburgh): I do not think hon. Members quite understand from the answer which the Lord Advocate gave just now, whether after an inquiry into a Bill in Scotland under the authority of one House, it might then be referred by the other House to a Select Committee.

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: No, Sir. The object of the Bill is really this, that there shall be a local inquiry by a Commission. That will be accepted probably by the House which has directed the inquiry as to existing facts. At the same time, that is not a matter on which it could with propriety control the action of the other House, and consequently that should be left to the judgment of the House which comes second in order.

The Motion was agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Laws relating to Local Government in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland."

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 187.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS BILL.

"On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to make Supplementary Provisions for amending the Laws relating to Local Government in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland."

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 188.]

PAROCHIAL BOARDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Laws relating to the election of Parochial Boards in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland."

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 189.]

PRIVATE BILLS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"On Motion of The Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the procedure in regard to Private Bills relating to Scotland, ordered to be brought in by The Lord Advocate, Mr. William Henry Smith, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland."

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 190.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

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SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES.

Supply—Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Class I.

Motion made, and Question proposed

"That a sum, not exceeding £36,379, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1890, for the Buildings of the Houses of Parliament."

*Mr. W. A. MACDONALD (Queen's County, Ossory): Mr. Courtney, when I was interrupted in my remarks upon this vote the other night, I was endeavouring to point out the distinction, to me a very real one, between the ventilation of the House itself, and of the rest of the building. With regard to the ventilation of the House itself, I said, I did not wish to speak at any length, because I had not such scientific knowledge as would enable me to speak wisely upon the question, but I did not wish to be understood that I was by any means satisfied with the results achieved even in this Chamber. The effect produced in our heads very often is in itself sufficient to prove that we are suffering from bad ventilation. I am inclined to think that the hot air pumped into the House is not particularly conducive to health. But what I have been mainly considering is the ventilation of the rest of the building, and it seems to me that we labour under the great defect that the ventilation is not systematic, that there is no attempt to ventilate according to any definite rule or principle. Occasionally a window may be opened, and a door swung back, but, speaking generally, the House is hermetically sealed. The temperature of the House is kept up to a certain height, but I believe I am right in saying it is the opinion of those best competent to form a judgment, that reasonable changes of temperature are good for the human body. We may be breathing the most pestilential atmosphere, while the thermometer is registering what is supposed to be the proper temperature, namely, 64 degrees. I think we should be all healthier and better if we had an average mean temperature in the House of about 60 degrees. One source of the pestilential atmosphere is the employment of gas. I wish we could have the electric light—certainly in most parts of the building—although I do not mean to say that we should then get rid altogether of bad air. The introduction of the electric light may be costly, but then the constituencies of the country are interested in the health of their Representatives; they are interested in the legislators of the country having clear heads, good constitutions, and good tempers when discharging the work of the country. I think it is most important that the ventilation of the House should be confided to some instructed person. If we are to have thoroughly good ventilation, it must be scientific ventilation; it must be conducted upon a rational principle by one man who quite understands the matter. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £500.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item E, of £16,000, for Warming, Ventilating, Lighting, &c., be reduced by £500"—(*Mr. W. A. Macdonald*).

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): I desire to say, in the first place, that I have never heard many of these points raised before to-night; in the second place, that the system of ventilation adopted, not only in this Chamber, but throughout these buildings generally, is according to the most approved principles of ventilation modern science has been able to suggest; and in the third place, that one officer, as able and experienced and trustworthy an officer as we could have, has charge of the whole establishment as regards ventilation. The hon. Gentleman has expressed a desire that the system of electric lighting should be carried further. The House is aware that we have since the last Session been able to extend the system of electric lighting to a certain extent, that is to say to the Members' entrance and to some of the rooms connected with the reporters' gallery. We hope during the Easter Recess to extend it to the Lobby outside this House and to some other portions of the buildings, but I do not think the Committee would approve of our entering upon a very large scheme of electric lighting in the present state of science on the subject.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway): I do not quite agree with the views of my hon. Friend (Mr. W. A. Macdonald), as to the ventilation of the House itself. My hon. Friend finds very little fault except in one particular; he thinks there ought to be a varying temperature. We have at the head of the Ventilating Department one of the most scientific men in England—indeed he is on the question of ventilation the standard authority in England—and at the present moment I understand that medical men recommend uniform temperature. I think that considering the immense number of people accommodated in this building, it is wonderful how well the place is ventilated. Personally, I should like to point out that the upper smoking room is continually overcrowded.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant to this item.

COLONEL NOLAN: Then I will simply say I trust we shall have an extension of the system of electric lighting. It is no answer to us to say that the Office of Works are waiting until the system is properly developed. If the right hon. Gentleman is going to wait until such time as that, the electric light will be no use to the present Parliament. What is the use of our providing for the next Parliament? We have to provide for our comfort and health, and I think the First Commissioner of Works should see that, as soon as possible, the arrangements for a development of electric lighting in the House are extended.

MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Newington, W.): I cannot help thinking the temperature of the House is kept too high. I have noticed that it is kept at 64 or 65 degrees, while in the Lobby the other night it was as high as 68 degrees. Unfortunately, I have had, during the last week, serious illness in my house, and the doctor ordered that the temperature of the sick room should be kept at 64 degrees. It occurs to me that if 64 degrees is a proper temperature for a sick room, it is scarcely a fit temperature for the House of Commons.

SIR W. FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I must confess I was disappointed with the right hon. Gentleman's statement as to the introduction of the electric light. Whatever be the condition of science, the Members of the House of Commons ought to have the advantage of the best form of light yet invented. When we remember that every gas burner—even of the most improved kind—consumes as much oxygen as five Members of the House, he will see that we ought to have all the gas burners not only in the House itself, but in the lobbies and other parts of the building, replaced by a means of lighting which would not interfere with the purity of the air. The right hon. Gentleman says this is the first time attention has been called to the bad atmosphere of the House. I remember that in the last Parliament we were obliged to suspend a sitting on account of the noxious atmosphere. It is essential that in this Chamber we should have the purest air, in order that we may bring to our work the best possible intellectual vigour. One cannot get that intellectual vigour and clearness of sight which we need unless we breathe the purest atmosphere. The general temperature of the House is not conducive to vigorous intellectual effort. It is probably five or six degrees too high. But when we leave the House and pass into the outer apartments, especially the Division Lobbies, and the Lobby just outside, the atmosphere is still worse. We do not have the building flushed with fresh air as it ought to be. Every part ought to be flushed every night and morning, and on Tuesdays between the morning and evening sittings. I have noticed that when hon. Members make speeches in this Chamber they always require some kind of beverage to sustain them in the effort. That is mainly due to the fact that the atmosphere we breathe is unnaturally dry. The right hon. Gentleman says the ventilation of the House is conducted on the most approved scientific principles. I know a little about ventilation. It has been a study of mine for many years, and I have never had much faith in scientific ventilation. I believe an open window or an open door is after all the best form of ventilation. When one goes through the hospital wards, as I do every other day, often during the Session, I find an open window the best system of ventilation. I should like to see a similar means of ventilation adopted here, even at the risk of producing a draught. I have observed that the complexions of hon. Members become bleached by continuous attendance in the House, and I believe that a cooler and moister air in the House, its rooms and lobbies, would conduce to the efficiency of the work, the personal comfort and the longevity of the Members of the House, of the officers of the House, and of those engaged in reporting the Debates. On that account I urge very strongly on the right hon. Gentleman the introduction of electric light and a larger flushing with pure air of the House and the adjoining apartments.

MR. TATTON EGERTON (Cheshire, Knutsford): I think that the system of ventilation is as nearly perfect as it can be. What is wrong is the source of the air with which the House is supplied. That air is already vitiated instead of being fresh and pure. Indeed, it has already been breathed before we breathe it. The subject is worthy of being reported upon by a Committee, and a Committee on which I served, which was known as the "Stink Committee," was anxious to make the necessary inquiry, but was precluded from doing so. If the House can be supplied with purer air, that alone would do something to preserve the health and prolong the life of Members.

*__MR. BRADLAUGH__ (Northampton): The point I wish to raise is, comparatively speaking, a small one, namely, the lighting in the Dining Room, which is open to Members and their friends. The electric light there is so bad that on several occasions candles have had to be placed on some of the side tables. I have already made this the subject of formal written complaint to the Kitchen Committee, and trust that it may receive attention from the First Commissioner.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I wish to support my hon. Friend (Mr. W. A. Macdonald) in his protest against the scientific torture which is inflicted upon Members of the House by means of what I can prove to be vitiated atmosphere. The symptoms which a man experiences when he obtains a seat in the House are most trying, but they are nothing, after all, to the symptoms he experiences when he has the honour to catch your eye. First of all, he sits here possibly for a couple of hours. His pulse becomes weak, the action of his heart becomes slow. There is no doubt—as you, Sir, have no doubt observed from time to time—a difficulty in breathing. Any keen observer will notice that hon. Gentlemen who sit on these Benches are breathing more or less from their abdominal regions. There is a curious sensation of hunger, and one cannot eat when food is presented to him. The whole system culminates in the state of coma, which we often see exhibited by Gentlemen who sit on the Benches below the Gangway. These are the undoubted symptoms of poisoning by carbonic acid gas, and the air which produces these symptoms must be very heavily charged with the gas. Well, Sir, there are many ways of ventilating the chamber. You may do it in a natural, and you may do it in an unnatural way, but, I think, of all the pieces of scientific blundering that was ever perpetrated upon an intelligent body of men, it is that which has been adopted in ventilating this Chamber. I am told, and I believe it cannot very well be contradicted, that the air which we breathe here is obtained from the cellars. Now, Sir, I am sure you will agree with me that there is nothing in the world which keeps well in a cellar but wine. This air, passing into the House, is charged with carbonic acid gas which passes through the floor in an unnatural way, and in so doing it obtains a double charge of the gas, which is in turn thrown out through the skins of hon. Members. Surely you do not want to be scientists to know that this carbonic acid gas must go somewhere. It is bad enough that it should be inflicted upon us, but you must remember it passes through the gratings into the ladies' gallery; and therefore you are not only poisoning yourselves, but you are poisoning those poor ladies who are good enough to come down here. Now you will say it is of no use complaining about the ventilation unless you can suggest a remedy. I propose presently to suggest a remedy, and hope that it will be put into operation. No man in his senses, except one suffering from acute bronchitis, would live in an atmosphere of over 60 degrees, and here, therefore, we have proof in the first place that scientists are humbugs, and in the second place, that we are being scientifically poisoned. What is the result of living in an atmosphere of 64 degrees, and in a vitiated atmosphere like this? It is the symptoms of which I have spoken, and the effects are twofold. They are present, and they are remote. I have referred to the present; to the remote I propose now to call attention. After you have sat in this House for six, eight, or ten months, your head becomes as bare as a billiard ball, and I think it may be observed that four-fifths of the Members of this House cannot read without glasses, and are, in fact, half blind. Now, this is a clear case of poisoning by carbonic acid gas. Thousands of pounds have been spent on the ventilation of this Chamber, but I am going to perform a service to this country, and to Parliament, by suggesting a remedy gratuitously, and I think that remedy can be applied at a cost of from £20 to £30. Let those scientific gentlemen, for whom I have great respect, accept my remedy if they will. In the first place, you must get out of the foggy atmosphere of science, and you must walk into the clear air of common sense. Let your carpenters get to work during the Recess, and stop up those holes in the floor which let up the air; open your windows, which constitute the proper outlet for the carbonic acid gas, and then, without having recourse to science, hon. Members will be able to sit here in comfort, and listen to the speeches of their colleagues, while I am perfectly certain that the ladies who come down will be very much benefited by the change of atmosphere.

Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I must express the extreme surprise I felt when I heard the right hon. Gentleman say he had never heard of these complaints before. Why, Sir, we hear complaints night after night on this matter. It was an acknowledged fact that for many years the House contained the worst possible air; the scientific gentlemen in charge of the ventilation had been pumping up the air from the drain, and I am bound to say that since the Committee caused that drain to be stopped up, a very great improvement has been effected. I heartily endorse the proposition of my hon. Friend, that the Committee should be allowed to go a little further and to look to the upper, as well as to the under, ventilation of the House. I remember it being remarked in one debate that we wanted a little of God's air instead of Dr. Percy's air. Why should we have this artificial air from Dr. Percy, instead of being allowed to have God's air? While I am speaking, I should like to ask how it is that, while the electric light has been extended in this House, there has been a simultaneous increase in the charge for gas? The gas companies are even worse tyrants than the water companies, for they get a good price for an article which is invariably bad, and I therefore think we are entitled to know why, while there is a large increase in the charge for electric light, there is an addition of £840 to the charge for gas?

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I wish to ask a question in regard to the electric light. I see it has been introduced into the entrance Lobby, and I wish to know why it should not be extended to the Cloak Room? This point was brought up last year, and it was then pointed out that the architectural beauties of that room were being spoiled, owing to blackening by the gas. I do not think the extension of the electric light would be very expensive, and it would undoubtedly preserve a portion of the House in which we all take great interest, and which is one of the finest parts of it, architecturally speaking. I would also ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will not reconsider his decision which he has just announced in regard to the further extension of the light? He suggests that we had better wait until we can get a perfected system; but, Sir, you will have to wait until Doomsday if you wait for that; and I think it would be absurd to postpone the general use of the light until then. Why, the railways would never have arrived at their present pitch of perfection in locomotion if originally it had been decided to wait for a perfected system. And then, Sir, I come to the question of oil lamps. This matter has been raised on several occasions in connection with this Vote; and I must say it is an extraordinary thing that whilst we are paying so much money for the electric light and for gas we should also be paying £2,000 a-year for oil lamps. These lamps in use are supplied to the Committee Rooms, to the Lobbies, and to the Reporters' Rooms, and so on. They are very dangerous and inconvenient, and I think it would be a great advantage if gas or the electric light could be substituted for them. As far as the general question of the ventilation of the Chamber is concerned, I have noticed that when the Chamber is not occupied, the windows are kept closed. Now, I hope that orders will be given that they shall be thrown open when the House is empty, in order that fresh air may be introduced. I do not desire to cast any reflection on the character or ability of those who are entrusted with the ventilation of the Chamber, but I think we have the fullest right, when the Vote comes up, to discuss these matters, and I hope that some of the suggestions which have been thrown out in the course of the debate will be carefully considered.

MR. O'HEA (Donegal, W.): I consider that the discussion has been a very useful one. The hon. Member for Ilkeston, in referring to the atmosphere of this House, spoke of it as having a tendency to make people prematurely old. Well, I have been a Member of the House nearly four years. When I entered it my hair was perfectly black; now it is almost white. But that is not all. Last year, having been in constant attendance from the beginning of the Session till the middle of July, I left England invalided, and for four weeks I was confined to my bed, while my convalescence occupied another four weeks, and I thoroughly believe, Mr. Courtney, that this was due to breathing the poisonous atmosphere of the House. I am only glad that by the mercy of Providence I have been sufficiently restored to resume my labours.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I rise, Sir, to reassure the constituents of the hon. Gentleman who has spoken lest they should imagine there is a probability we shall all perish and die. I, for my part, consider the ventilation of this House to be absolutely perfect. Statistics, Mr. Courtney, are in my favour; for they show there is nothing which conduces so much to longevity as being a Member of this House and sitting in it during long hours. We have been told that the air comes up from the cellars charged with carbonic acid gas. But, Sir, the air does not come up from the cellars; it enters at the opening at the end of this Chamber, and instead of passing through the Ladies' Gallery, it goes through the suspenders above. We have been told that the windows ought to be opened. Why, Sir, that would make a draught downwards, and disorganize the whole system; it would destroy the perfect ventilation which we now enjoy. There is, however, one little point I wish to call attention to. Rain is now pouring through into the Opposition Lobby. I do not know whether that is a deeply laid scheme on the part of the Government to swamp the Opposition. In conclusion, I wish to say that Dr. Percy is a gentleman who thoroughly understands the system of ventilation, and it is hard that we should denounce him when his system is as near perfection as possible.

*MR. PLUNKET: I should have spoken before in order to disabuse the minds of hon. Members of the feeling of terror probably produced by some of the speeches, had it not been for a hope that terror might cause an immediate exodus of Members and that the discussion should in that way be brought to an end. But, Sir, I can confirm the statement of the hon. Member for Northampton that the air we breathe is the purest that can be brought from outside the House, and it is carried away—not through the Ladies' Gallery, but through the roof. I have been asked as to the electric light in the Dining Room. We have tried the experiment of dispersing the light in the different corners of one room, and as a result the light will be similarly dispersed throughout the other Dining Rooms with as little delay as possible. The reason why the electric light system had not been carried out more completely in this House, is that hitherto we have not been quite clear whether it would be cheaper to manufacture the electric light for ourselves than to take it from one of the electric lighting companies. We are still watching the development of that question, but in the meantime we are extending the light as much as with our present plant we can. As to this year's Estimate for gas showing an increase over that provided for in last year's Estimate, it is accounted for, first, in calculating the amount that may be required, we must remember the gas burned during the Autumn Session; and, secondly, by the fact that more rooms are now lighted with gas, and that in the Reporters' and other Rooms several gas fires have been introduced. Further than that, there is a general demand for more brilliant light; for instance, within the last few years the amount of gas burned in the Lobby outside this Chamber has increased 100 per cent.

*MR. W. A. MACDONALD: I think that we, the Party of reform, who are not confined to one side of the House, have some reason to complain of the spirit in which we have been met by the First Commissioner of Works. He has altogether denied the reality of our complaints, and, I suppose, doubts their reality still, in spite of the medical testimony that has been brought forward. Now, the hon. Member for Northampton has not replied to my arguments; my speech referred, not to the ventilation of this House, but to the air in the remainder of the building. If the right hon. Gentleman had met us in a spirit of concession and promised that some attention should be paid to this matter, I should not have persisted in my opposition, but I regret that it will now be necessary to divide the Committee.

MR. W. M'ARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid.): My attention has been called to the item of £2,000 for oil lamps. That strikes me as rather heavy, for if you had five hundred lamps in use, and you burnt, say, a shillingsworth of oil per week in each—which I think is an outside estimate — you would, in thirty weeks, spend only £750. I think there must be some serious waste in this item. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will look into this matter.

*MR. PLUNKET: This question has been raised several times. I may point out that the charge is not only for oil, but also for the hire of the lamps, and I cannot hold out any immediate hope of reducing the item.

MR. W. M'ARTHUR: I ask hon. Members as men of business if there is any sense in an Assembly like this hiring its oil lamps? I should like to know what we pay for the hire. I fancy if any one of us wanted lamps in our houses we should be looked on as fit for Bedlam if we started by hiring the lamps. I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he would amplify his statement by telling us where he hires the lamps, and what he pays for them?

*MR. PLUNKET: I will ascertain.

MR. O'HEA: I should like the right hon. Gentleman to tell us whether the lamps are hired on the three years' system?

MR. R. POWER (Waterford): Practically, my hon. Friend's Amendment amounts to a Vote of Censure on the First Commissioner of Works; but my hon. Friend has made some mistakes. The present system of ventilation was invented some 35 years ago, and three or four Committees have sat on the question. It is universally admitted that no one more competent to manage this system could be found than Dr. Percy. The variations in temperature are settled by the Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, and the censure, if any, should be directed against them. I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman that the Committee of last year should be re-appointed, and then perhaps my hon. Friend would withdraw his Amendment.

MR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I do not wish to reflect in any way upon Dr. Percy, but I say that Dr. Percy is deceived by the atmosphere of scientific knowledge in which he is moving. I decline to believe that the carbonic acid gas that is generated in this Chamber can be conveyed through the ten little pipes in the ceiling. It is a fallacy. We are being poisoned—there is no doubt about it—and until we have the House ventilated upon some scientific principle we shall continue to be poisoned.

*MR. W. A. MACDONALD: If the right hon. Gentleman will re-appoint the Committee, I will not press the matter to a division. I may say that I do not wish to make a personal attack upon anybody, but merely to assert the great principle of healthy sanitation.

Question put and negatived.

Original question again proposed.

MR. R. C. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): Last year the question was raised as to placing Reports of the proceedings of this House in the different lobbies and rooms where Members spend the intervals of their time; and, in order to take the sense of the Committee on the question, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £50. It is a great inconvenience when Members are in the Lobby or other parts of the House not to know what is going on here. The numbers of the House are so inordinately large that it is impossible for us all to find places here, even if we would. A great many speeches are made to which very few people desire to listen, and it would effect a very great economy of time if hon. Members could arrange to come in at the time when they felt their presence was required. A good many speeches would, I think, be spared if hon. Members were not forced to loiter about the House in order to discover the exact minute at which their presence here is needed. The fact of who presides, of who is addressing the House, and the course of the debate ought, I think, to be posted, either through the tape machine or in some other way, in the Lobbies, Smoking Rooms, etc. The only objection I have heard urged against the proposal has come from the Whips. I do not think everything can be sacrificed to the Whips, and I beg to move the reduction.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £36,329, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Munro Ferguson.*)

*MR. PLUNKET: I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of the proposal of the hon. Member, and I have more than once expressed that opinion in this House. I prepared at one time a scheme for the purpose of giving effect to such a proposal, but decided opposition was threatened from many different quarters and it was abandoned. If there was a sufficient apparent unanimity, or even the opinion of a considerable majority, in favour of the change, I would certainly do my best to have it carried out. It is not necessary to reduce the Vote by £50. Let the hon. Gentleman satisfy me that there is a considerable majority of the House in favour of the proposal, and I will endeavour to deal with it.

*MR. S. GEDGE (Stockport): I must say I do not see why we should depart from our Constitutional mode of expressing our opinions in this House. It is not competent for an hon. Member to move an increase of the Vote or I am sure we would gladly do so on this matter. That being so, the only thing we can do is to vote for a reduction. No doubt this House is worse supplied with news of what is done inside it than any place in London. If you go home to dine and want to know what is going on in the House, you are obliged to go to your Club. If, like good boys, you come straight to the House, in obedience to your Whip, all you can do is to hang about in the hope of finding out what has happened. I hope that telegraphic information will be given to us, and that my right hon. Friend (Mr. Plunket) will not press upon us the idea that if we want anything we are to get up "round robins" to the Government. Perhaps my right hon. Friend will be able to induce the telegraph companies to give us the information gratis if he is hard pressed. We supply them with information, and it is not too much to ask that they should give us reports of our proceedings.

Mr. S. BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Whilst I should be glad to obtain an addition to our present means of knowing what has happened in the House, I am totally opposed to the suggestion of my hon. Friend (Mr. Munro Ferguson) that we should have information telegraphed over the building as to what is going on at the moment. I do not think that the present attendance of hon. Members in the House is too great except on big occasions, and I believe the adoption of my hon. Friend's proposal would tend to diminish that attendance rather than to increase it. Of course we should all rush in if we knew that my hon. Friend was going to speak, but as far as humble individuals like myself are concerned, our only chance of getting an audience is to wait in the House until chance favours us. I trust that the Amendment will be pressed to a division, and that it will be rejected.

Mr. A. PEASE (York): I believe that Sir E. Buxton, when a Member of this House, got up a memorial in favour of a proposal of this kind, and that it was signed by a very large number of Members on both sides. A distinct declaration was then made from the Government Bench in favour of giving Members some facilities of the kind. For my own part, I strongly support the proposal that such facilities should be given.

Mr. J. S. GATHORNE HARDY (Kent, Medway): If we are to consider the convenience of Members who will not take the trouble to be in the House we had better have telephones to all the rooms, so that hon. Members could hear the debates without entering the House at all. It seems to me it is an absurdity to suppose that hon. Members who do not sit in the House can be kept continually posted up in what is going on.

Mr. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I heartily support the proposal of my hon. Friend the Member for Leith (Mr. Munro Ferguson); but if the right hon. Gentleman will give us any assurance that this very useful reform can be carried out, I hope my hon. Friend will not proceed to a division.

Question put and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. PHILIPPS (Lanark, Mid): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works whether it is not possible to remove the grating from the Ladies' Gallery. The strangers who find seats above the clock are allowed to watch the proceedings of the House without having a screen interposed between them and us, and I do not see why the ladies at the other end of the room should not be permitted to do the same. Only 24 ladies are allowed to come here at once, and only those in the front row can see what is going on. It seems to me to be a ridiculous thing to keep the grating where it is.

Mr. G. A. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner whether any steps have been taken to place the control of the whole of this building under one Minister. A portion of the Houses of Parliament are at present under the control of the hereditary Great Chamberlain, and it was by the leave of the hereditary Great Chamberlain that a statue was erected in the Central Hall, which greatly interferes with and disfigures its beauty. The Great Chamberlain is an official over whom Parliament has no control whatever, and I wish to know whether any steps have been taken to place the building under the control of one official?

***Mr. PLUNKET**: The subject of the Ladies' Gallery has been very frequently raised in this House, and I do not think the House is in favour of any alteration in the direction suggested by the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Philipps). In answer to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck) I have to say that no step has been taken to interfere with the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain.

MR. PHILIPPS: As the right hon. Gentleman seems to have no reason for refusing to remove the grating, except that the House has never pronounced in favour of its removal, I think the best thing is to give the House an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on the subject; and I therefore move to reduce the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £36,279 be granted for the said Services."—(*Mr. Philipps.*)

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not know whether my hon. Friend has proposed this reduction in the interests of Members or of the ladies. My own opinion is that the ladies would prefer to have the grating. I do not think we are so particularly ornamental that they desire further facilities to look at us; and whilst they have the grating in front of them they can be more at their ease, and need not unless they wish come in evening dress. I should like to know whether my hon. Friend has polled the ladies on the subject. I do not think they desire the removal of the grating; and I shall therefore vote against the Amendment.

*SIR R. N. FOWLER (London): I recollect that, twenty years ago, on the Motion of Mr. Samuelson, brother of the hon. Member for the Forest of Dean (Mr. G. B. Samuelson), we had a great debate on this subject, and decided against removing the grill. I do not see why the House should differ now from the decision then arrived at.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 73; Noes 192.—(Div. List, No. 66.)

Original Question again proposed.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I have given notice of an Amendment by the reduction of the Vote, which I hope I may not be obliged to move, attention being given to my request. Hon. Members who have occasion to visit the Tea Room during the afternoon know how inconveniently crowded it frequently is, so that Members cannot find a place at the tables, and are detained an unreasonable time from the House. Eight tables, with four chairs each, give but 32 places for the whole of the Members of the House, and the addition of chairs and tables will not meet the requirements. I would suggest that the room in which the papers are now laid out should be added to the Tea Room and that the papers should be placed in the Library. It would be a simple change to make, and a much larger number of us would then be able to take tea at the same time. The hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth (Sir W. Lawson) and friends of the Temperance movement should support me in this, because if Members fail to find accommodation in the Tea Room they are driven to other places where drinks are supplied of not so harmless a character. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by £75.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £36,304, be granted for the said Service,"—(*Mr. Herbert Gardner.*)

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I can hardly agree with my hon. Friend. It was in 1882, I think, that, mainly through the alliance between the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord Randolph Churchill) and myself, it was agreed we should have a Smoking Room on the same floor with this House. It was agreed we should have the Tea Room as a Smoking Room, and a very fair Smoking Room it would be. But a much respected Member of this House, Mr. Beresford Hope, opposed the proposal, and got up a "round robin" against it. The present Smoking Room would then have become the Tea Room. But then we are still in the same Smoking Room, hugger-mugger, from 30 to 80 together at one time in a room much too small, and often when we retire from the excitement of debate here, for the soothing influence of nicotine, we cannot find a vacant seat. Of late, much accommodation is required by Gentlemen engaged in chess. I do not object to chess, but let us have a Smoking Room and a Chess Room in some proportion to the numbers of Members using it, and we can give up the present Smoking Room to the tea drinkers. We should have had it in 1882 but for the deference paid to the wishes of the late Mr. Beresford Hope, and I hope now that the First Commissioner of Works, whom I sometimes see looking through the heavy atmosphere of the Smoking Room with an expression of pity and despair on his face, will give us some hope that a better arrangement will be made.

*Mr. PLUNKET: It is only within the last few days that I explained to the Committee, in relation to another Vote, that, as one result of the opening of new rooms on the other side of Westminster Hall, I should be able to provide an additional smoking room for Members of this House, and I do submit that, considering how long this Vote has been under discussion, the question of whether the tea should be taken to the Smoking Room, or the smoke to the Tea Room, should not further detain the Committee.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

(2.) £110,824, to complete the sum for Public Buildings, Great Britain.

*Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): The Tower of London comes within the limits of my constituency, and I propose to move a reduction of this Vote by way of giving expression to opinion on a matter that concerns the inhabitants of Whitechapel. I have to ask why the public are excluded from the riverside promenade, access to which they enjoyed in former times. Two years ago I presented to the Secretary for War a petition, signed by 5,000 of my constituents, praying that the public might have free access to the Tower Gardens also to the riverside promenade. I thankfully acknowledge that the first request was granted, and in consequence, thousands of the inhabitants of the East End, principally of the working classes, have enjoyed these gardens, laid out by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association at a cost of £1,000, and maintained at an annual expenditure of £150. The expense of maintenance would be considerably reduced if the Tower authorities would direct the attendance in the Gardens of a couple of Beefeaters to act as caretakers. The duties would not be onerous, and the uniform of the Yeomen of the Guard would be an additional attraction. The concession made by the Secretary for War was made in an economical spirit, he stipulated that the laying out of the garden should not be a source of public expense; therefore, the money had to be obtained from outside sources. It is perhaps a similar economical spirit that prevents a military band playing there in the summer. Last year, a police band played there every Saturday, and this year it has been arranged that they shall play every alternate Saturday. I applied to the Constable of the Tower to fill up the gaps by allowing the military band to play on the other Saturdays, but he replied that the band was occupied at the West End of the town. I do not doubt that the band is more pleasantly and profitably employed, but they would be more usefully employed in giving enjoyment to the people of the East End, whose opportunities of musical enjoyment are more rare. Then the use of the riverside promenades is refused. The reason assigned is that war stores are landed there. This is a very old story——

*Mr. PLUNKET: The hon. Gentleman will forgive me for interrupting him, but the question cannot be appropriately raised on this Vote—it comes under the War Office Vote.

*Mr. MONTAGU: I apprehend that access to the Tower Gardens might well be discussed under this Vote?

The CHAIRMAN: It is a question of fact what portion of the expenditure upon the Tower comes under Item B. If the First Commissioner says the grounds are not referred to under the item, then it would not be proper to discuss the question.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I have ascertained the fact, or I should not have interrupted the hon. Member.

Mr. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): I take the opportunity of calling the attention of the First Commissioner to the want of facilities for seeing the public records in the Record Office. It is proposed to bring in the electric light, and I think the public might derive some advantage from a better exhibition of these records. At Paris, in the Palais d'Archives there is the most interesting collection in Europe perhaps, and so arranged that the history of France for centuries can be read in the actual documents inclosed in glass cases along the walls. In the Record Office interesting documents are stowed away, and quite inaccessible, owing to the unfitness of the building for exhibition. In France the collection is open on certain days to the public, other days being reserved for scientific men, and I trust it may be possible to allow our Record Office to do some educational work, that the public may derive some advantage from the collection.

Vote agreed to.

(3.) £4,500, to complete the sum for the Admiralty, Extension of Buildings.

(4.) £12,800, to complete the sum for Furniture of Public Offices, Great Britain.

(5.) £210,614, to complete the sum for Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain.

(6.) £24,740, to complete the sum for County Court Buildings.

(7.) £22,000, to complete the sum for Metropolitan Police Court Buildings.

(8.) £6,717, to complete the sum for Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland.

(9.) £175,000, to complete the sum for Surveys of the United Kingdom.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith, &c.): I should like to ask whether there is any prospect of the new survey of Scotland proceeding at a more rapid pace than has marked its progress of late?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes. I answered a question on this subject the other day, and was able to assure the hon. Member who asked me that as soon as the survey of Lancashire and Yorkshire is completed, which will be within the next two years, then three or four divisions of the Survey Staff will be at once applied to a re-survey of those six counties of Scotland in which the hon. Member is, I think, principally interested. With a view to facilitating the work a Survey Office will be opened at Edinburgh.

MR. M. J. KENNY (Tyrone, Mid): May I ask if any progress has been made with the Survey in Ireland, or what the Government propose on that subject? Further, I would ask whether any new maps have been produced for the use of the Land Court in Ireland? Also, I would suggest that new maps should be produced at a price that would bring them within the reach of suitors in the Court. At present an exorbitant price is charged—a prohibitory price so far as suitors are concerned.

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes; the Survey is proceeding satisfactorily in Ireland. The hon. Member probably knows the revision of the Survey on the 6-inch scale has been proceeding for some time; but by order of the Treasury in 1887 the revision will in future be made, and is now being made, on the 25-inch scale.

*MR. M. J. KENNY: Will it be made uniform?

*MR. PLUNKET: I believe it will eventually.

MR. HALDANE (Haddington): Are we definitely to understand that Lancashire and Yorkshire are the only two English counties of which the Survey is not complete; and that when these two counties are completed, proceedings will be taken immediately for surveying the six remaining counties of Scotland?

*MR. PLUNKET: That is so.

MR. BLANE (Armagh, S.): I would press the question of my hon. Friend as to the expensiveness of the Government maps, which prevent their use being availed of in the Courts. Seeing that Parliament votes money for the Survey, I cannot, for the life of me, see why such a high rate should be charged for copies of these maps. The cost of the smallest map is, I believe, £1 10s., and that is the amount, perhaps, of several years' reduction of rent on a holding. I would impress upon the Department the issue of cheaper maps for the use of suitors.

*MR. PLUNKET: The state of the case is that maps were produced for the Land Court at considerable expense, and are often used by the suitors. It is supposed that the expense is recoverable from the parties to the different suits in the Land Court; but it has, unfortunately, been found very difficult to make this sum really available. Again and again the outstanding balances have been so large that attention has been called to them by the Public Accounts Committee. In 1880, the outstanding balances were £10,667 odd, and on December 31, 1888, they had risen to £13,000 odd. I am afraid it is not possible to promise anything further on the subject.

MR. BLANE: Why should not the Government prepare cheap maps? Poor tenants who appear before the Land Commission Court endeavouring to obtain a reduction of rent, have to show their holdings on draftings transferred on parchment from the Ordnance maps, and these often cost more than several years of the reductions ultimately granted. The smallest of these maps, I believe, costs £1 10s., which is a very serious item for these poor people to have to pay.

*Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): Will not the right hon. Gentleman consider the desirability of making these maps more acceptable and available to a large class of persons than is at present the case? In those countries where there is a compulsory system of land registration maps are kept in the Post Offices and other public places, and the public can consult them, in some cases, for a small fee, and in other cases for no fee at all. This system does not prevail in England; but I cannot help thinking that if it did it would be of great convenience to people who desire to consult maps of their own localities from time to time. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will take into his favourable consideration the advisability of adopting some such scheme as this.

Mr. M. J. KENNY: The question I raised was not as to litigants in the Landed Estates Court, but those before County Courts and Judges of Assize. At the present moment it is impossible to obtain an Ordnance Survey map in Ireland on the smallest question of title for less than £1 10s. I say that that is an absurd charge, and amounts very often to absolute injustice being done to a poor litigant. The 63,000 cases in arrear in the Landed Estates Court are due to the action of the Land Registry itself, who require these maps to be put in as evidence.

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I do not gather from the statement in the Estimates that much is realized from the sale of these maps. The right hon. Gentleman said the cheapest cost is £1 10s. for a portion of a district or a county. It is an old system on the part of the Government to have large profits and small sales, but what we would desire to see would be large sales and small profits. The paper on which these maps are printed does not cost 30s.; but a certain amount of the cost of getting up the Survey is charged on each map sold, and the result is that poor people cannot buy them. The Surveys cost much more than is realized by the maps, and I think we ought to stretch a point and let the cost of survey be a little more, so long as the result will be to cheapen the price of the maps.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The cost of preparing the maps is only that of paper and printing. Nothing is charged for the Survey of which these maps are the result. I do not think it would be reasonable for anyone to expect to get the maps for less than is at present charged.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Are we to believe that these maps cost 30s.?

Mr. JACKSON: No.

*Mr. PLUNKET: That which costs 30s. is I believe a drawing of a particular holding. I am speaking of the ordinary Survey available to all the country for all purposes. The maps are produced as cheaply as possible.

*Mr. F. S. STEVENSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of sending the maps down to the localities? He might send them to the most populous localities first, and afterwards to the less populous parts of the country.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I will consider the matter.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I always refrain from giving unnecessary trouble to the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works, who is invariably most courteous in his answers, but I must ask for some explanation as regards one of these sub-heads. I desire to know how it is that there is a large decrease in the pay of labourers connected with the Ordnance Survey, and I must say I do not know why it should be left to an Irish Member to ask the question? I find there is a decrease of £7,410 in the pay of the poor labourers who do the work, and I wish to know how it comes about. I think we are entitled to inquire into these small items, especially as in one direction we notice an increase, and as the answers we get are frequently of a very unsatisfactory character.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The Survey to which the Item "A" refers is approaching its completion; therefore, it is not necessary to employ as much labour in connection with it now as has been essential in the past. The increase the hon. Member has referred to is owing to the fact that we did not take quite enough money last year, and we are anxious this year to avoid that unfortunate state of things.

DR. TANNER: I am afraid I cannot remain satisfied with that answer, although the right hon. Gentleman has given it with his usual courtesy. I do not like taking up the time of the Committee on such a small matter, but this discussion will, I think, show that it is impossible to get a satisfactory explanation from the people who are spending the money of the taxpayers.

*MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will explain how it is that under Item "A," which has reference to "the staff," which, I believe, includes the well-paid officials, who do the least work and get the best pay, there is only a reduction of £80; whilst there is such a great reduction under Item "C," which covers the labourers. I hope that on grounds of fairplay the right hon. Gentleman will give us some explanation of this.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, since we had this Vote under consideration last year, he has given any attention to the question of the possibility of making better arrangements for the sale of the Ordnance Survey maps? Dissatisfaction has been expressed on more than one occasion with the monopoly certain houses possess in the sale of these maps, and it has been pointed out that it would tend very much to the convenience of the public generally if the agencies for the sale of the Ordnance maps were extended. I would ask also if the right hon. Gentleman has had an opportunity of considering, since we discussed that Vote last year, the suggestion I made that special attention should be extended to the mining districts of the country in regard to this matter of Survey?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member was reminded last year that the Geological Survey is not under this Vote.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was led into the error by seeing the words "Engraving the Geological Survey" in the Estimate. However, I will bring the subject on under a Vote for the Science and Art Department.

*MR. PLUNKET: The reduction under Sub-head "C" is not so much for labour as Civil Assistants. It is necessary to employ a staff to supervise the revision of the Survey as it is going on, and the course we are now adopting is the result of experiments we have made. We believe that the system we have adopted is the best for the convenience of the public.

MR. O'HEA: I think, looking at the usefulness of the Ordnance Survey sheets in the Land Courts, that some means should be adopted to prevent the public being unnecessarily taxed on their acquisition of them.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £7,210, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1890, for the Expenses of the Erection and Maintenance (including Rents, &c.) of Buildings for the Department of Science and Art."

MR. A. ACLAND: I beg to move that you, Sir, do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again,"—(*Mr. Arthur Acland*,)—Put, and agreed to.

COUNTY COURTS APPEALS (IRELAND) BILL (No. 128).

Order for Committal read.

Objection taken to further proceedings.

REMOVAL OF WRECKS ACT (1887) AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 3.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

DR. TANNER (Cork, Mid): I should like to ask how it is that hon. Gentlemen opposite are so prone to deal with and obstruct Irish measures which we to the best of our ability try to carry through? Although I have been asked not to do so by hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House, to whose opinion I desire to defer in every way, I cannot help on this occasion moving that you, Mr. Courtney, do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. It is rather a sad thing to be placed in this position, but I take it that some sort of compromise ought to be made, and that instead of an hon. Member on the other side of the House obstructing, as he has done without reason, any business which we Irish Members are anxious to promote on behalf of our constituents, he ought to advance, at least, some reason for such an interference with the business of the country.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I do not like to interfere with the progress of this measure, in which Gentlemen on this as well as on the opposite side of the House are interested; but I must say I think there is great reason for the step which has been taken by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Cork, who has been driven to move that Progress be reported in consequence of the obstruction offered by an hon. Gentleman opposite to our proceeding with the Committee on the County Court Appeals (Ireland) Bill. This is, I think, a measure which has the sanction of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The question is that I report Progress, and ask leave to sit again; and if the Motion before the Committee is persevered in the matter comes to an end.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman report Progress, and ask leave to sit again," agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again on Thursday.

HORSE FLESH (SALE FOR FOOD) BILL. [Bill 49.]

Bill, as amended, considered.

On the Motion that Clause 1 be read a second time,

Mr. CONYBEARE: Is the House to understand that this Bill is to be made applicable to Scotland and Ireland?

Mr. KNOWLES (Salford, W.): With the approbation of hon. Members opposite, a clause has been drafted to include Ireland and Scotland.

New Clause (Application to Scotland) amended and added.

On Clause 2.

Mr. CALDWELL (St. Rollox): I am sorry the Law Officers for Ireland are not here, as I should like them to explain what is here intended, as no definition of it is given. There is a provision as to procedure in Scotland, but under what procedure can the Act be enforced in Ireland?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster): The matter has not been lost sight of. There is no necessity, in applying the Act to Ireland, to make any Amendment, except a definition of the local authority. It is not necessary to insert the words with regard to procedure.

Bill read third time, and passed.

HERRING FISHERY (SCOTLAND) BILL.—[Bill 16.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

And, Objection being taken to further Proceeding, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1883) AMENDMENT BILL.—[Bill 58.]

Considered in Committee, and reported; as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1882 (MORGAN HOSPITAL, DUNDEE.)

Mr. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose): I regret to detain the House at this time of the morning on this matter, which has reference to a hospital in Dundee for 100 poor boys. A sum of £70,000 was invested for that purpose. The boys were to be received from Dundee, Forfar, Montrose, and Arbroath. Now, the scheme has outlived the condition of the charity. The Hospital is to be sold, and the 100 boys are to be educated at any public school, and what is necessary is to be paid from the fund for their maintenance. No opposition will arise on that part of the scheme; but the operation contemplated will leave free a considerable portion of the income, which is to be divided between four towns. Dundee will have the lion's share; but of that there is no complaint. As regards Montrose, Arbroath, and Forfar, Section 29 of the scheme provides that

£100 shall be paid to each of them, upon condition that each spends the £100 on a higher class school. There are higher class schools in Montrose and Abroath, and, therefore, those boroughs are content. The only objection comes from Forfar, which has no higher class school within the meaning of the scheme. It has a Government-grant-earning school within the meaning of the Education Act; but before it could convert it into a higher class school, so as to claim its share of the surplus income, it would have to give up the Government grant. A Parliamentary Commission has investigated this question, and has recommended that where these higher class schools are established, Government grants should be given to them just as to elementary schools established under the Education Act; and it is upon that recommendation—and pending legislation upon it—that the Commissioners have, I submit, erroneously taken upon themselves to put a penalty upon Forfar, and they say—"Unless you establish a higher class school, you shall not have a share of this fund." The matter becomes all the more important when it is remembered that the money was intended by the testator for the education of poor children in Dundee; and by the proposal of the scheme, which is objected to by Forfar, it is asked to spend the £100 share not in the education of the poor, but in secondary education. The position of the School Board is this—they are divided in opinion, and printed statements on the subject have been issued by the Board and by the Town Council, and circulated in this House; and so strong is the public feeling in Forfar upon the subject that a Petition has been signed by 1,100 ratepayers out of 2,100, asking that the action of the Town Council may be sanctioned. On these grounds I beg to move the Motion which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her Majesty to withhold Her consent from the scheme for the management of the endowment in the Burgh of Dundee and County of Forfar, known as the Morgan Hospital, approved by the Scotch Education Department (by Act), and now lying upon the Table of the House, in so far as regards the conditions attached by Section 29 of the said scheme to the annual payments therein provided for to the School Board of Forfar."—(*Mr Shiress Will.*)

MR. CALDWELL (St. Rollox, Glasgow): Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion. The scheme proposed is to carry out the system of the Charities Endowments Commissioners, whereby they have been asking for a good many years past to take the funds for the purpose of promoting secular education in the country. The result of all their efforts during the last eight years has been that secondary education, instead of being promoted, has been on the decline in Scotland. Owing to the adoption of the School Board system, elementary education is becoming almost the sole education in the parochial schools of Scotland. A secondary education is being furnished out of the public schools. The Endowment Commissioners think they will promote secondary education by big secondary schools, and by eliminating the secondary education from the elementary schools. Experience shows that to be a fatal policy, and the longer it continues the more secondary education will go down in Scotland. What does the School Board of Forfar say? That they are willing to carry on the old Scotch system of having secondary education in elementary schools. They wish to continue the ordinary grants they have as a Board School, and also to get this £100 for promoting secondary education in their school. If it is a sound theory that technical education should be adopted in our ordinary schools, then it will not do to adopt the scheme in its present form.

*MR. J. A. CAMPBELL (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): This Motion refers to a scheme of some magnitude. It is a scheme which chiefly affects Dundee, but also to some small extent three burghs represented by the hon. and learned Gentleman who has brought forward the Motion. The proportionate interest in it of these different communities will be understood when I point out that of any surplus funds five-sixths go to Dundee, and the remaining sixth is divided equally among the three burghs —Arbroath, Montrose, and Forfar. Forfar, therefore, from which place alone there is opposition, has one-eighteenth interest in the scheme. But even Forfar is not unanimously opposed to the scheme. The objection comes from the Town Council; but the educational authority, the School Board—as represented by its Chairman—are at least by a majority opposed to the proposition now before the House. I would call attention to the fact that the Commissioners, in fixing the conditions of the grant of £100, give the alternative that if the Forfar School Board do not choose to establish a higher class school in the meaning of the Education Act, then the money may be expended in sending foundationers to an advanced school elsewhere. The intention is that the Forfar School Board shall erect part of their academy into a higher class school; and to show that this is not regarded with alarm, the majority of the School Board say that while, of course, they would prefer to receive the grant unfettered, yet, rather than lose it, they would take it as offered in the scheme. The scheme has the hearty approval, not only of Dundee, but of the educational authorities in Arbroath and Montrose, and, to a certain extent, of those in Forfar; and, therefore, I hope the House will not think of stopping it, as it will effect a great reform in the administration of the endowment.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): As representing the borough most largely interested in this scheme, I wish to say I hope that the House will not accept the Motion.

The House divided:—Ayes 18; Noes 118.—(Div. List, No. 67.)

House adjourned at a quarter before One o'clock.

[APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE following is the corrected version of the Speech delivered by MR. F. H. EVANS in the course of the Debate on Naval Defence, on the 4th April, and is to be taken in place of the Report commencing on Page 1651 of this Volume :—

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 4th April, 1889.

MR. EVANS (Southampton) : I desire to put before the House a question which must deeply affect the expenditure upon our Navy, and which has not yet been alluded to by those who have taken part in the debate. In doing this I shall have to quote the remarks that have been made on prior occasions by one or two of the Members of this House. In the *Times* of the 9th of March there is a letter from the noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) in which the noble Lord said—

> "For the purposes of effectually strengthening the Navy there is again universal agreement as to the absolute necessity for precise information as to the duties which the Navy ought to be expected to perform in the event of war with one or other of the European Powers."

That is as to the duties the Navy may be expected to perform in time of war. Then, again, in the *Times* of the same date, there is a letter from the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone (Lord C. Beresford), who says—

> "I then made it perfectly clear that the 74 ships I asked for were necessary for defence of our commerce and to insure the delivery of our food supply and raw material in case of a war with France alone, if we are to adopt the only right principle—viz., 'to watch, and, if possible, destroy every warship of an enemy.'"

And, beyond this, there is the First Lord of the Admiralty, who is reported in *Hansard* as having said—

> "We are the carriers of the sea-borne products of the world, and it is utterly impossible to suppose that the whole commerce of the world is coming to an end because of the action of 20 or 30 cruisers."

And, again, the noble Lord had said—

> "We should be able to protect our main trade outes."

To what do these remarks all point, unless it is that the Admiralty are not able to define the duties the Navy will be expected to perform, and that they are setting aside a certain amount of naval power for the protection of the maritime commerce of the country. I propose to show that all the expenditure which is made in that direction is useless, and can be of no avail in any circumstances whatever. I am second to no man in my desire to have a thoroughly effective Navy, but I cannot go with the hon. Baronet who has cited Cobden with a view of showing that peace can be maintained without such aids; and, as he has called in Cobden as a witness, I will call him in too, and remind the House that he once said—"Our life as a nation depends on our having the masteryofour communications by sea." I am unfortunately familiar with the terrible devastations of war. I know what war means and what it would mean to this country, and I may add that the county I live in would be one of the first to suffer in case of a European conflagration. It will, therefore, be understood that if I say anything against the Vote, I am quite alive to the great risk incurred if any mistake is made. We are the carriers of about seven-elevenths of the produce of the world, What would be the effect of war upon this maritime commerce? There are two occasions which may be taken to form our judgment on this point — the American War, and the scare about Russia three years ago. When war interferes with maritime commerce, it does so first by creating a war premium, which has to be paid on what is being carried. You have the capital invested in the ships and the capital invested in the cargo, and every charge that has to be made in order to keep a ship going must eventually be sustained by the cargo. When, therefore, war takes place, the cargoes belonging to the nation at war have to pay a war premium. Well, what does that premium amount to? Before the American Civil War of 1860 the Mersey was full of American clippers. The Americans were our great competitors in the North Atlantic carrying trade; in fact, they had rather the better of it. The first premium that was paid as a war premium was only 5s.; but when the Alabama and Shenandoah came out the premium advanced until once or twice it reached as high as £40. It does not require any great amount of intelligence to know that such a premium as that absolutely killed the Mercantile Marine of America. Of course it might have been possible to have resuscitated it; but the reason why it was not was this: the enormous cost of the civil war made it necessary to raise an enormous amount of taxation. The Americans taxed everything, including steel and iron; and the result was that as we were at that time passing very rapidly into the steam carriers, no American could build a steamer at anything like the price that we could, so that it became impossible for America to compete with us in the carrying trade of the world. Then the navigation laws of America prevented the Americans from buying ships in foreign countries and sailing them under the American flag, and the result was that we were left as carriers of the main commerce of the world. Having alluded to the effect of the increased premium of insurance, during the American Civil War, I now come to the scare as to a war with Russia. Although that was only the faintest suspicion of a scare, it resulted in a premium of 15s. per cent. on our main trade routes. Now let us take the case of a great war. So great is our superiority in regard to our Mercantile Marine, not only in speed and efficiency, but also in numbers, that I should think between 80 and 90 per cent of the fast steaming vessels of the world belong to this country. In the case of a small war the Mercantile Marine of England would defy the risks, as the number of steamers, in comparison to cruisers which could be sent out against them, would be so overwhelming; but the effect of a great war, if continued for any considerable time—and it is in contemplation of the possibility of a great war that this expenditure is to be incurred—would be to destroy the whole of the Mercantile Marine of this country, by reason of the high war premium which would be exacted. When the First Lord of the Admiralty tells me it is utterly impossible to suppose that the whole commerce of the world is coming to an end through the action of 20 or 30 cruisers, I will tell the First Lord of the Admiralty he does not comprehend what he is speaking about. When the merchants of England find it impossible to bring their goods under the flag of England owing to the extra war premiums, the cruisers the Admiralty are going to build will wander along the main trade routes, the sole carriers of the English flag. It is said the British people possess such pluck they will face that state of things; but it is not a question of pluck; it is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence—the produce will be conveyed by the cheapest carrier. It is a great pity that, with regard to what an hon. Member opposite called our main line of defence, but which I must call our one line of defence, on which we ought to be unanimous, we have no confidence in the administration of the Admiralty. There is no sacrifice which any man who has once seen war would not make to stop the invader from putting his foot on our shores. What is the policy of the Admiralty? They are going to build 70 ships all at once. If a manager of any of our great companies were to say, as the First Lord of the Admiralty has said, that he proposed to lay down at once a Fleet equal in proportion to the 70 vessels now proposed by the Admiralty, he would not long remain in the position of manager. The policy of the great companies is to put down just as few vessels as is necessary, and then watch for improvements. Inventors innumerable will press their patents upon you—it is the art of the manager to avail himself of the best—he must keep his Fleet equal to, or better than, his competitors. No more suicidal policy can be devised than to lay down 70 vessels on a fixed plan, which the improvements of the next few years might render almost obsolete. For these reasons, showing the lack of any real and comprehensive study of the duties which the Navy will be called upon to perform in time of war, I am sorry I have such a lack of confidence in the administration of the Admiralty that I feel constrained to vote against the Resolution.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCXXXIV.

SECOND VOLUME OF SESSION 1889.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

Bills, Read 1°, 2° 3°, or 1^{a}, 2^{a}, 3^{a}, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—*Amendt.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Comm.*, Committee.—*Re-Comm.*, Re-Committal.—*Rep.*, Report.—*Consid.*, Consideration.—*Adj.*, Adjournment or Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.*, Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*M. Q.*, Main Question.—*O. Q.*, Original Question.—*O. M.*, Original Motion.—*P. Q.*, Previous Question.—R. P., Report Progress.—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes.—*M.*, Majority.—*1st. Div.*, *2nd. Div.*, First or Second Division.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

When in the Text a Speech is marked thus*, it indicates that the Speech has been revised.

The subjects of debate have been, as far as possible, classified under "General Headings:"—*e.g.*, ARMY — NAVY — INDIA — IRELAND — SCOTLAND — PARLIAMENT — POOR LAW—POST OFFICE—METROPOLIS — CHURCH OF ENGLAND — EDUCATION — CRIMINAL LAW — LAW AND JUSTICE AND POLICE, &c.

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